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Latinidad in London

An ethnographic study exploring how Latin American Londoners represent their ethnic community discursively

Kelsall, Sophie

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***Latinidad* in London:**
An ethnographic study exploring
how Latin American Londoners
represent their ethnic community
discursively

Sophie Kelsall

**Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
King's College London**

November 2012

Abstract

This thesis investigates how Londoners who migrated from Latin America – especially Colombia – represent their ethnic community discursively. It examines how the notion of *latinidad* is articulated in relation to local and global cultural narratives, and how the London Latino community is constructed strategically and hierarchically. It is guided by a social constructionist perspective and an interpretive approach. It draws on ethnographic research involving fifteen months of participant-observation at a Latin American complementary school, multiple encounters with three families, and twenty-five semi-structured interviews with adolescents and parents. This study argues that there are pressures and incentives for the London Latino community to essentialise strategically, and to maximise the appeal of community heritage to non-group members, so as to gain recognition, resources, and popularity. Tensions arise when families in and outside the community seek to acquire linguistic heritage – Spanish – for pragmatic reasons, and when they do not see speaking Spanish as necessary for authenticating ethnic membership. This study also finds that Latinas are associated with attractiveness, beautification, and seduction. Practices linked to appearance and dancing are seen as respectable or as excessive, and are coded in terms of aspiration, thus reflecting processes of stratification. Overall, this thesis finds that *latinidad* is mediated through linguistic, embodied, and gendered practices. These are evaluated according to the forms of social and cultural capital they are perceived as facilitating. The transnational dimension of trajectories and ideologies is an important factor in shaping discourses of *latinidad*, especially in accounting for the contingent exchange value of these semiotic practices. This study problematises the idea of ‘Latin American community’ and operationalizes the concept of *latinidad* in the London context. It contributes to understanding how language and gender ideologies are lived and are open to negotiation among migrants and their descendents in a global city.

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother

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List of acronyms

| | |
|--------|------------------------------------------------------|
| AIU | <i>Alianza Iberoamericana UK</i> |
| BEM | Black and Ethnic Minority |
| BFI | British Film Institute |
| ELA | <i>Escuela Latino Americana</i> |
| ESOL | English for Speakers of Other Languages |
| FE | Further Education |
| GLA | Greater London Authority |
| HE | Higher Education |
| KIPORG | Knowledge Is Power Organisation |
| IOE | Institute of Education |
| LAWRS | Latin American Women's Rights Service |
| MFL | Modern Foreign Language |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| NRC | National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education |
| ONS | Office for National Statistics |
| SNS | Social Networking Site |
| SOAS | School of African and Oriental Studies |
| TESOL | Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages |

In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.

Benedict Anderson (1996:6)

But to say that a category such as race or gender is socially constructed is not to say that that category has no significance in our world.

[The most pressing problem], in many if not most cases, is not the existence of these categories, but rather the particular values attached to them and the way that these foster and create social hierarchies.

Kimberlé Crenshaw (1993:1296, 1297)

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Researching *latinidad* in London

The “Latino community” is an “imagined community” – to summon Benedict Anderson’s well-worn phrase – a quintessential present-day example of a social group etched and composed out of a larger, impinging geopolitical landscape. The role of the social imagination and the imaginary in the self-conception of nationally, ethnically, and “racially” kindred groups is of course central, but must always be assessed with a view toward how they are being imagined, from the “outside,” and to what ends and outcomes.

Flores (1997:185)

1.1 Introduction

106.00 Monika the first thing they always say is em
 they say to me
 obviously about the drugs
 cos I’m Colombian
 they always do that
 Yesika oh yeah the cocaine
 Monika or they’ll be like
 “oh do you salsa?”
 yeah I dance
 or what’s the other thing they do
 oh yeah they ask you about the language
 “oh do you speak Spanish?” ()
 or they always say
 “oh d’you know any good Latin clubs?”
 they’re about the four things
106.18 everyone always says to me
Data extract 1.A Interview with Monika and Yesika (12/08/09)

This exchange took place on a summer afternoon, while sisters Monika and Yesika and I were sitting cross-legged on their mother’s bed, eating flapjacks. I had travelled to their neat council house, in a quiet, leafy, but fairly dilapidated estate in one of the most ethnically diverse and socially unequal boroughs of London, to hear about their experience of being born in Colombia and growing up in London. At the time, they were aged 20 and studying, respectively, biology and engineering.¹ They knew me as a research student who helped their mother on a Saturday and who was interested in finding out about Latin Americans living in the capital. The sisters had first shown me around their house and introduced me to

¹ In this study, ages are indicated in numbers (e.g. 20).

their boyfriends (Colombian and Ecuadorian) before we settled in their mother's bedroom, where we talked, mostly in English, for over two hours. On the way out, we stopped to look at the glamorous photographs of their *quinceañera* (the coming of age celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday in Latin America), hanging proudly in the staircase. This was the first of several visits to their home, during which we shared meals and the four members of the family – all women – talked about their daily lives and their peers. It was one of many conversations I had with a range of people (adolescents and adults) about what it meant, to them, at that time and place, to be from Colombia or Peru or Ecuador, to be *latino/a*, and to be living in London. What was striking in these conversations was how the question of how Latin Americans were seen, and were seen to be doing, emerged again and again.

In the opening extract, Monika and Yesika describe how Londoners react to their Colombian origin. According to them, the immediate associations and prominent characteristics of being Colombian, for people who do not identify as such, are (a) cocaine, (b) salsa, (c) Spanish, and (d) Latin clubs. Although it probably represents an age-specific perspective (that of their peers), this account is nevertheless useful for highlighting how people can become identified with particular products and practices, and how these can be construed as typical or revealing of the group in question. Thus, in the UK, Colombians commonly evoke criminality (cocaine, drug-trafficking), while Latin Americans more generally may be associated with sensuality (salsa, Latin rhythms) and stereotyped as passionate and as innate dancers. The mention of cocaine, salsa, and Latin clubs in Monika and Yesika's account also illustrates how cultures can become exoticised, commodified, and seen through the prism of consumer entertainment. Finally the mention of Spanish reveals how geographical origin and ethnic affiliation are commonly read in linguistic terms; in other words, it seems commonsensical that members of an ethnic group are joined (and thus the group is defined) by their ability to speak the same language. The reason for beginning with this extract is to draw attention to some of the key factors at play in how an ethnic group comes to be conceptualised intersubjectively, and represented discursively: existing nomenclatures (e.g. Latin American), ideologies of language (e.g. Colombians speak Spanish), media images (e.g. Colombian drug barons), and popular culture narratives (e.g. Latin Americans are good at dancing).

The opening quotation by cultural theorist Juan Flores relates to the 'Latino community' in the United States (USA), i.e. the country's largest ethnic minority, which has been extensively researched; yet it can also apply to the 'Latino community' in the United Kingdom (UK), i.e. a small and, until recently, mostly invisible and under-researched

minority. This thesis explores how the ‘Latino community’ is imagined in *London*; building on Flores’ insights, it is concerned with the dialectic between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ imaginings, and their “ends and outcomes.” More specifically, it seeks to uncover how *discursive representations* of the London Latino community are shaped by, and feed into, a social imaginary. It aims to shed light on how migrants from Colombia mainly – but also from other Spanish-speaking Latin American countries – imagine their ethnic group, that is, how they talk about other Colombians / Latin Americans and how they construct the idea of ‘Latin American community’ contextually. It investigates why and to what extent the type of ‘outside’ associations outlined above (cocaine/criminality, salsa/Latin clubs, and Spanish) may inform the ways in which these people chose to represent their community, in specific settings. It examines how discursive representations of *latinidad* (Latin American-ness) are shaped by expectations and ideologies concerning social position and semiotic practices (associated with language, appearance, and dance). In sum, this study grapples with issues of representation from within the community in order to develop a more sophisticated understanding of how social actors make sense of what constitutes being Latino/a, in the London context.

This project is the result of a confluence of concerns and experiences. As someone who grew up in a Franco-English environment, I was interested in questions of bilingualism and language choice within the family. As a secondary school language teacher, I was drawn to young people and the ways in which they make sense of the world around them. I had a long-standing interest in Latin America, which had led me to study Latin American Cultural Studies to MA level. When I started this project, I had been a migrant in London for over ten years and considered it to be my home; at the same time, I was aware that people tended to be confused by the fact that I was French as well as English, spoke Spanish fluently, and looked mixed race (that is, I do not look White European; in fact, it is often assumed that I am Latin American). In the Equal Opportunities forms asking about ethnicity, I ticked ‘British and Asian,’ yet internally identified as French and as someone who was settled in London. All of this gave me insights into some of the complexities of having multiple attachments in terms of ethnicity, language, and location. It also made me appreciate that ethnic identification could be a multifaceted process involving questions of place (where one was born and where one lives), citizenship (which nationality/ies one has), language (which language/s one can and does speak), and embodiment (how one looks).

This first chapter seeks to contextualise the study from multiple perspectives. The second section provides different elements for understanding how ‘the Latin American community’

is imagined in the London context. It starts by interrogating the term ‘Latin American’ and defining the epistemological stance adopted in this thesis (Section 1.2.1). It follows by providing some background information on the population of Latin American descent in London, explaining why it has been characterised as invisible and un-recognised (Section 1.2.2) and describing some of the places, events, and problems associated with it (Section 1.2.3). The third section locates the study in relation to scholarship on *latinidad* and on Latin Americans in London, identifying the ways in which this thesis builds on previous studies and attends to existing lacunae (Section 1.3.1). It then justifies the choice of methodology and gives a broad outline of data collection (Section 1.3.2). It ends by providing an overview of the thesis (Section 1.3.3).

1.2 Imagining a community: Latin Americans in London

1.2.1 What is meant by ‘Latin American’?

“It can be said without contradiction both that social realities are social fiction with no other basis than social construction, and that they really exist, inasmuch as they are collectively recognized.”

Bourdieu (1996:20)

The term ‘Latin American’ is problematic. Both the terms ‘America’ and ‘Latin America’ were coined by European colonisers to designate the New World territories that had been taken over by force and are thus the product of the invader’s perspective. Prior to this, there is no evidence of political or ideological unity across a vast continent characterised by cultural, linguistic, and phenotypic heterogeneity. It is therefore through the process of colonisation that commonality is forged, notably as a result of Spain seeking to impose one language (Spanish) and religion (Catholicism) across its empire. Before and during the wars of independence in the early nineteenth century, a collective consciousness develops in opposition to the imperial power, among political and intellectual circles. The independence fighter and thinker, Simón Bolívar, stands out in his attempts to advance the cause of a “pan-America” and the strategic alliance of various parts of the Spanish empire in order to form the “*Patria Grande*,” or “Great Homeland” (Bolívar [1815] 2007). Around the turn of the nineteenth century, the Cuban intellectual José Martí praised the racial and cultural hybridity of “*Nuestra América*” [our America], calling for Latin American republics to unite, take pride in their indigenous heritage, and resist US hegemony (Martí 1891). In the twentieth century, writers such as José María Arguedas favoured the term ‘Indo-America’ to emphasise the indigenous (rather than the colonial/European) past and population of the

continent (cf. Arguedas 1975). Currently, the term ‘Latin America’ is used for geo-political purposes, such as the strategic alignment of countries in relation to other hemispheric blocks (e.g. the ‘Community of Latin American and Caribbean States,’ an alliance of thirty-three states). Locally, individual nation-states (e.g. Colombia) and indigenous groups (e.g. Aymara) provide the primary frames for self-categorisation and the construction of groupness. However, as a result of the process of extra-continental migration, the panethnic labels *latino* and *latinoamericano* acquire salience and strategic relevance as group descriptors. In the USA, the term ‘Latino’ has been embraced to wield greater force in the political arena, inter alia, but it has also attracted criticism for being no more than a statistical construct conflating widely divergent realities (for instance, as Suárez-Orozco and Páez ask (2008:3): “[w]hat does an English-speaking third-generation upper-status white Cuban American in Florida have in common with a Maya-speaking recent immigrant from Guatemala?”).

This thesis adopts a social constructionist perspective; as such, it regards the notions of ‘*latino*,’ ‘Latin America,’ and ‘Latin American community’ as social constructions, whose articulation is, as has just been demonstrated, inextricable from socio-political history and agendas. In other words, the epistemological stance taken here is that terms such as ‘Latin American’ and ‘community’ are used by social actors to make sense of and to shape their world, and do not refer to pre-existing entities with essential characteristics. Instead it considers that group belonging is enacted and negotiated through practice, and that social positions, labels, and definitions are always relational, in other words, are always articulated in relation to something else.

Having problematised the term ‘Latin American,’ I now turn to some of the issues regarding ‘the Latin American community’ in London, namely: invisibility, recognition, and image.

1.2.2 Invisibility and recognition

The first comprehensive survey of one of London’s lesser known migrant groups, *No Longer Invisible: the Latin American community in London* (McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011), was launched at London’s City Hall in 2011.² This report had been jointly

² In this study, the word ‘migrant’ is preferred to ‘immigrant’ as it conveys the possibility of (ongoing) mobility, as opposed to one-directional movement and settlement. The term also suggests social status, since it “tends to carry class connotations and is applied more readily to people that are considered economically or politically deprived and seek betterment of their circumstances” whereas “transnational elites are perceived as ‘mobile’ rather than ‘migrant’” (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002:8).

commissioned by Latin American Women's Rights Service (LAWRS)³ and Trust for London, the largest charitable foundation concerned with poverty and inequality in the capital. Opening the proceedings, the chair of LAWRS announced that the occasion was a "really momentous event for the Latin American community," for which LAWRS had "struggled for twenty-eight years to gain recognition."⁴ She outlined several reasons why this community was "invisible" in London: (a) it was classified as "other" in ethnic monitoring forms, (b) it was very diverse ("we might look Chinese, Black, European..."), and (c) an "overwhelming" number of Latin Americans worked in "hidden sectors of the economy." After introducing the report, she passed on to the Deputy Mayor of London, who heads London's Strategic Migration Partnership. He started by celebrating London's diversity (with people from "43 countries" and more than "300 languages"). He then announced that the Greater London Authority (GLA) had decided to use the category 'Latin American / Ibero-American' as part of its ethnic monitoring, acknowledging at the same time that the process had been difficult ("six different names were discussed"). He continued by praising the "richness of culture, of music," the "flamboyance," and "joy of life" of the Latin American community in London (Fieldnotes 19/05/11).

This event communicated concern about the hardship, discrimination, and exclusion faced by Latin American migrants, and enthusiasm about how the demographic and socio-economic data contained in the report could be used to give this population greater exposure and thereby support its needs better. The title of the report drew attention to the idea of *invisibility*, which can be taken to designate various dimensions of conceptual and social absence. Firstly, it can refer to a lack of specifically Latin American phenotypical features (illustrated by the chair of LAWRS when she stated that "we might look Chinese, Black, European..."), which entails that Latin Americans are not visually identifiable as one ethnic group. Historically, Latin Americans have been presented as the result of *mestizaje* (the process of interracial and/or intercultural mixing), in other words, as the descendants of indigenous inhabitants, European colonisers, African slaves, and, more recently, European and Asian settlers.⁵

³ LAWRS is a charity which supports the immediate and long term needs of Latin American women migrants in the UK. It offers, inter alia, advocacy, advice and prevention on violence against women; support in skills development, job applications and CV writing; workshops and accredited ESOL classes; regular seminars on welfare, rights and women's issues; and community awareness campaigns. Retrieved 28/11/11 from <http://www.lawrs.org.uk/>.

⁴ In this thesis, the use of speech marks "..." indicates a direct quotation.

⁵ "During the nineteenth century, *mestizaje* was a recurrent trope indissolubly linked to the search for *lo americano* (that which constitutes an authentic [Latin] American identity in the face of European and/or Anglo-American values). More recently, since the late 1980s, the concept of *mestizaje* has come to play an important role in the recognition of the plurality of cultural identities in the region and, therefore, of the hybrid constitution of the nation, as well as in the formation of a diaspora identity forged under the rubric of *lo hispano* or *lo latino*. In short, because Latin America is one of

In addition, as the chair of LAWRS also pointed out, the idea of invisibility alludes to a statistical nonexistence: the dearth of a ‘Latin American’ category in ethnic monitoring forms has meant that Latin Americans have rarely appeared in demographic break-downs. The non-inclusion of a ‘Latin American’ category, in contrast to ‘Black’ or ‘Asian’ categories, can be explained by three main factors: (a) the near-absence of postcolonial links between Britain and Latin America (as opposed to the Indian subcontinent for example), (b) the limited migratory flows from Latin America to Britain, and (c) the absence of a clearly established Latin American population (whereas the existence of a Chinese community is visible through its restaurants for instance). This has meant that, historically, Latin Americans have not been considered to be one of the main components of the UK population. This is reflected in academia, where minorities have traditionally been described as Black (or Brown) or Asian (cf. Hall 1992; Mirza 2009 for examples), and it has resulted in Latin Americans being rarely mentioned in public discourse about minorities. In turn, this has made the task more arduous for activists fighting for the acknowledgement of the existence of Latin Americans, for the recognition of their community’s needs, and hence for the funding of specific services. Therefore the inclusion of a ‘Latin American/Ibero-American’ category as part of the GLA’s ethnic monitoring marks a critical point in the campaigns for ethnic recognition that have taken place in London (led by, amongst others, the *Alianza Iberoamericana UK*, cf. Plate 1.1); nevertheless, the failure to secure a ‘Latin American’ category in the 2011 national census is also significant. The question of ethnic classification and recognition will be examined in more detail in Section 2.3.2.

the regions in which racial and cultural mixing has taken place most extensively and most violently because of the nature and timing of colonization, *mestizaje* is a theme that virtually every Latin American writer/intellectual has addressed in one fashion or another” (Martínez-Echazábal 1998:21). See also Suárez Pinzón (2005) for an historical overview of *mestizaje* in Colombia.



Plate 1.1 *Alianza Iberoamericana UK stand at the Carnaval del Pueblo 2009*

The quasi-absence of Latin Americans in public debates also reflects the fact that few Latin American Londoners occupy top jobs or have a prominent profile. (Miss Universe GB 2010, Tara Hoyos-Martínez, is a notable exception, to which I will return in Chapter 6, 6.2). This lack of public visibility extends to the labour market in general: over half of Latin Americans are employed in elementary and personal service occupations such as cleaners, kitchen assistants, and security guards (McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:56).⁶ Working in the cleaning industry is the most common form of employment among Latin Americans (almost a third of all jobs, *ibid.*); indeed, in a previous study, McIlwaine (2008c:21) found that among her participants, there was an assumption that cleaning was an integral part of being a Latin American in London. This type of low-skilled, low-paid work is also low-profile. Office cleaning, for example, tends to involve awkward, unsociable hours (before and after office hours), and involve little or no contact with customers or office workers. The lack of public visibility of such jobs, allied with the precarious immigration status of many Latin Americans, facilitates exploitative practices such as under-payment (cf. McIlwaine 2007; McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011).⁷ With regards to employment, the key demands for recognition are three-fold: (a) an amnesty for irregular migrants, who, in their majority, pay taxes, but cannot access contribution-based benefits (cf. McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:58), (b) decent wages and employment rights, and (c) credit for the low-status but

⁶ Similarly, in the USA, Latinos are disproportionately employed in low-status, low-wage, and low-skilled sectors such as food preparation and cleaning services (De Fina & King 2011:164).

⁷ See also the case of the suspended cleaners from Amey PLC and the Justice for Cleaners Campaign.

indispensable labour carried out by workers such as cleaners. There is also little acknowledgement among Londoners that many Latin Americans, like other migrants, have suffered downward mobility as a result of migrating to the UK and that, despite their over-representation in elementary occupations, many have a relatively high level of education (cf. McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:35). The mismatch between the level of education achieved and the type of employment obtained is often due to the non-recognition of Latin American qualifications and to insufficient proficiency in English.

Finally, the notion of invisibility hints at the geographical dispersion of Latin Americans, which means that there is no identifiably Latino *barrio* (neighbourhood) in London, comparable to East Harlem in New York for example (cf. Zentella 1997). Nevertheless, there are concentrations of Latin Americans in the south-eastern boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark, as well as a number of Latin American businesses (such as eateries, shops, money-transfer services, and nightclubs) in and around Elephant and Castle (borough of Southwark) and Seven Sisters (borough of Haringey) (Cock 2009; McIlwaine 2005; Román-Velázquez 1999).⁸ However, neither Elephant and Castle or Seven Sisters have a high profile in the capital: both are situated away from the centre (unlike Chinatown, for instance) and are located in areas not known for their attractiveness or affluence (cf. Plate 1.2). In fact, Cock (2009:210-211) describes them as “neglected locations” and reports that his Latin American participants commonly saw them as “dangerous places where dodgy activities regularly take place.”⁹ Moreover the ‘Latin American visibility’ obtained by the commercial spaces around Elephant and Castle makes them problematic for undocumented migrants, as it makes them a target for immigration raids (Cock 2009:216).



Plate 1.2 The shopping centre at Elephant and Castle

⁸ When the Puerto Rican urban music group *Calle 13* came to play at the Coronet in Elephant and Castle, the venue advertised the event thus: “*Calle 13* return to the UK in the heart of London’s Latin barrio, Elephant and Castle.” Retrieved 18/05/10 from www.coronettheatre.co.uk.

⁹ See Cock (2009:175-217) for a detailed exploration of Latin American commercial spaces in London.

Consequently, these various forms of invisibility – phenotypic, statistical, official, academic, occupational, geographic – explain why Latin Americans have been described as an “invisible minority” (cf. McIlwaine 2007; Block 2008; McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011).

1.2.3 Presence and image

This being said, there are clear indications of the presence of Latin Americans and of the appreciation of Latin American cultural heritage in London. These signs of *latinidad* are primarily tied to cultural consumption and entertainment. Occasional exhibitions on major pre-Columbian civilisations usually attract high numbers of visitors (e.g., ‘Aztecs’ at the Royal Academy of Arts, 2002-2003; ‘Moctezuma’ at the British Museum, 2009-2010). Located in affluent Knightsbridge, the Hispanic and Luso-Brazilian Council (better known as Canning House) organises talks, screenings, and fee-paying events such as wine-tasting, which are attended by diplomats, scholars, and members of the professional classes. However, the most visible and popular spaces of *latinidad*, frequented by Londoners from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, are the salsa bars (e.g. Fiesta Havana) and ‘Latin rhythms’ nights (e.g. *La Bomba* at the famous nightclub Ministry of Sound). There are also a number of annual events organised to celebrate and popularise Latin American art forms; for instance, the small London Latin American Film Festival has been running since 1990, while the Colombiage festival showcases Colombian culture and specialises in exchanges between Colombia and the UK since 2007. As the city’s second biggest street carnival, the most high-profile Latin American event in London is indisputably the *Carnaval del Pueblo* (People’s Carnival), held in Southwark since 1999 and which now attracts over 100,000 people (GLA 2010a); as such, it is the largest celebration of Latin American cultures in Europe.

Cultural manifestations such as these combine to create an image of a continent blessed with a distinguished historical heritage (especially pre-Columbian civilisations) and a fashionable contemporary culture (spearheaded by hypersexual global icons like Shakira and popular dance forms such as salsa). Thus, Latin Americans are seen to be enjoying a “richness of culture, of music,” characterised by “flamboyance” and a “joy of life,” to recall the words of the Deputy Mayor at the first launch. The idea of ‘flamboyance’ most likely refers to the dazzling costumes and exotic dances displayed by performers at events such as the *Carnaval del Pueblo* or the Lord Mayor’s Show (cf. Plate 1.3); it may also act as a euphemism for their scantily-clad appearance and suggestive performance. These aspects of Latin American culture have arguably been well-received in the West, where they feed into a

general discourse that associates *latinidad* with loud colours and hedonistic sexiness, and portrays Latin Americans as infectiously fun-loving and cheerful. For instance, the GLA's press release on the 2010 edition of the *Carnaval del Pueblo* evoked how the carnival "explodes in joyous and colourful fiesta glory," while the Mayor described the Latin American community as "vibrant" and as a group that "knows how to throw a party" (GLA 2010a).



Plate 1.3 Dancers at the *Carnaval del Pueblo*

Latin Americans have also traditionally been associated with the idea of heat. In line with the aesthetic of carnival, the idea of a 'hot Latina' is synonymous with exoticism, sexiness, and seduction. Furthermore, the notion of a 'Latin temperament' suggests a 'hot temper' and a passionate, even irrational disposition. Illustrating how such stereotypes can have serious repercussions, the staff at LAWRS have found that, in cases of domestic violence, men in London sought to rationalise disputes by blaming the women's 'Latin,' i.e. hysterical, disposition.

The alluring image painted above by the Mayor contrasts sharply with the sombre picture painted by recent studies on Latin Americans in London. For instance Wright (2010) found that her sample of Peruvian migrants experienced significant barriers to achieving well-being, notably: loss of autonomy and freedom, routine and monotony, stifling consumerism, family separation, language barriers, and loss of status. Latin Americans have also claimed to have suffered from prejudice and discrimination from other Londoners, and reported envy, mistrust, malicious gossip, and exploitative practices among fellow Latin Americans (Block 2008; Cock 2009; McIlwaine 2007, 2008c; McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011; Wright 2010). This alleged absence of unity and solidarity has even led Block (2008:18) to

conclude, despite an exceedingly small sample of four interviewees, that there was no Latin American community in Baumann's sense of the word (i.e., "as a refuge from feelings of alienation in contemporary life, the sense of belonging to a collective, and trust in one's acceptance by that collective"). One of the reasons for such a bleak portrayal of the community may be the fact that many of the participants operated at the lower echelons of the social hierarchy, where survival depended on work that tended to be underpaid and unappreciated, and to involve long and unsociable hours. In addition, the drug trade, the political armed conflict in Colombia, and the permanent fear of deportation among those with an irregular status are also said to be factors inspiring suspicion and anxiety among Colombians (Cock 2009; McIlwaine 2007). These findings echo those of Guarnizo (1999a:373), who found that, as international drug trafficking has become synonymous with Colombian identity worldwide, this has led to stigmatisation, social fragmentation, and generalised mistrust among Colombians in New York City and Los Angeles. In the UK, which has one of the highest rates of cocaine consumption in Europe (UNODC 2011), the connection between Colombians and cocaine is commonly and jokingly made. In London, Cock (2009) found money from the drug trade was never far away from successful Colombian businesses and that some Colombians avoided Latin American commercial spaces because of their negative image and their association with drug-dealing.

Thus, there are very different ways of representing 'the Latin American community' in London. There is the one conjured up by the chair of LAWRS: as an overlooked and socially disadvantaged minority. There is the one evoked by the Deputy Mayor: as an ethnic group renowned for its entertaining and seductive cultural practices. Then there is the afflicted and fragmented collective described in some of the literature. These are only three of the ways in which 'the Latin American community' is imagined, revealing how notions of ethnicity, social position, and gender can coalesce and consolidate into ideological constructions. Of special interest to this study is the salience of these representations among Londoners from Colombia and Latin America, and in which contexts and to what effects they are mobilised. In particular, it investigates how the search for *recognition* – be it in terms of the supposed existence, needs, or characteristics of a group – is intrinsically linked to how Latino Londoners portray and evaluate 'the Latin American community.'

1.3 The thesis

1.3.1 General aims and contributions

In the USA, where migration from Latin American countries spans several generations, scholars have explored how *latinidad* – i.e., Latin(American)-ness – is produced, performed, and negotiated in, inter alia, literature (Aparicio & Chávez-Silverman 1997; Caminero-Santangelo 2007), the city (e.g. Laó-Montes & Dávila 2001), and the media (Mendible 2007; Valdivia 2008; Molina-Guzmán 2010).¹⁰ Closer to this study, ethnographies using a linguistic anthropological lens have yielded insights into divergent discursive constructions of ethnic authenticity within the Latino population (e.g. Ramos-Zayas 2004 on constructions of Puerto Rican-ness; see also de Genova & Ramos-Zayas 2003). Adapting Molina-Guzmán’s (2010:3) definition to the UK context, I conceptualise *latinidad* as a social construct shaped by external forces, such as popular culture and the UK census, and internally through the individual subjectivities and communal cultural expressions of people who identify as Latina/o. Thus, although there may well be some common denominators, being a Latino/a in cities such as New York, Madrid, and London is shaped by contextual specificities, such as the ways in which Latin Americans are typified in the national or local imaginary. Consequently, I understand *latinidad* to be relative to socio-historical context and to be a notion characterised by fluidity, subject to negotiation, and produced through social relations. Furthermore I conceive of *latinidad* as a construct that can be gendered and, by extension, I align with Molina-Guzmán’s (2010:10) position, according to which the gendering of *latinidad* presupposes that femininity and masculinity are interconnected with class, sexuality, race, and ethnicity as systems of signification.

In the UK, where Latin American migration is a recent, predominantly London-based phenomenon, and where ‘Latinos’ are still a relatively ‘invisible’ minority, the discursive and cultural production of *latinidad* is an under-researched area. Two exceptions, related to the London context, are relevant to this thesis. In a case-study of Spanish-speaking Latinos (SSLs), the sociolinguist David Block (2006) identifies distinct “discourses of Spanish-speaking Latinidad,” which he defines as “differentiated and perhaps even competing ways of describing, making sense of, analysing and evaluating the institutions and processes associated with being an SSL in London” (p.137).¹¹ Block’s analysis is valuable in that he suggests a typology of discourses – the voices of the *marginado* (marginalised), *asimilado* (assimilated), and educated expatriate – which brings to the fore the interconnections between language practices, social position, and processes of integration. In a study of Latin American identities constructed through Latin sites and salsa clubs, the media and

¹⁰ The polyvalent term ‘*latinidad*’ refers to what is ‘Latin’ and can be translated as latinicity or Latin-ness. It has been used in the context of the Roman Empire and of the colonisation of the Americas by ‘Latin’ countries (i.e. France, Spain). In this thesis it refers specifically to Latin American-ness.

¹¹ In this thesis, the terms ‘Latin American,’ ‘Latino,’ and ‘Latin’ are preferred to Block’s (2006) label “SSL” and are used interchangeably, in order to reflect the way in which they were used by participants.

communication studies scholar Patria Román-Velázquez (1999:151) draws attention to the embodied nature of Latin identities, arguing that “the embodiment of Latin identities emphasises the material and symbolic practices through which identities are experienced according to a wider politics of gender and sexuality.”

This thesis builds on these two studies by examining how Londoners from Latin America articulate *latinidad* discursively and as mediated through linguistic, embodied, and gendered practices. By asking why the Latin American community is represented in certain ways, and in relation to which practices, this study investigates the local production of a Latino imaginary. Drawing from Flores (1997:188), I understand the imaginary not to signify the ‘not real,’ some make-believe realm oblivious to the facts, but instead to denote a projection beyond the ‘real’ as the immediately present and rationally discernible; it is the ‘community’ represented ‘for itself,’ a unity fashioned creatively on the basis of shared memory and desire, congruent histories and meshing utopias. Thus this thesis seeks to delineate aspects of a Latino imaginary, which, to adapt Flores’ insights to the London context, refers to home countries in Latin America, the landscapes, lifeways, and social struggles familiar, if not from personal experience, at least to one’s family and people, and in any case indispensable to Latinos in situating themselves in U.K. society (ibid.). As part of this imaginary, given the socio-economic constraints and downward mobility experienced by many Latin American families, this thesis focuses on how certain cultural practices are perceived as facilitating access to different forms of capital, and hence, as enabling upward mobility. Concomitantly, this study is concerned with the hierarchising nature of discourses since, once upward mobility is seen as a possibility and energies are expended to achieve it, ethnic groups must inevitably become internally stratified (Comaroff & Comaroff 1992:63, emphasis in the original).

Almost all the other studies on Latin Americans in London have been firmly anchored in the social sciences (particularly in geography and migration studies) and have focused principally on processes of integration and transnational practices among adults (cf. Bermúdez Torres 2003; Carlisle 2006; Cock 2009; Guarnizo 2008; James 2005; McIlwaine 2007; McIlwaine 2010; McIlwaine 2011; McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011; Però 2008; Wright 2010). In this regard, they exemplify a tendency among migration scholars to pay disproportionate attention to adults (Mahler & Pessar 2006:35). This thesis differs from these studies in at least three ways. Firstly it focuses on *families* and addresses issues related to the *children of Latin American migrants*, an area to which, until McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker’s report (2011: Chapter 10), the literature had paid little attention, despite a need identified by recent scholarship. For instance McIlwaine (2007:52) had called for the “issue of young people dealing with a dual identity of being Latin American and British at the same

time” to be addressed, while Guarnizo (2008:29) had recommended that “the study of the situation of the children of Latin American immigrants [be] at the forefront of future research” [my translation].¹² In this study, the issues related to the children of Latin American migrants concern language practices within the family and beautification and aspiration among young women. Indeed, the second way in which this thesis differs from previous studies is in its focus on *Latina femininities*. Gender ideologies have been explored among adults (cf. McIlwaine 2008a, 2008b, 2010), but no research has until now given detailed attention to the perspectives of young women from Latin America, engaged in academic or vocational studies in London. Thirdly this study is based around a Latin American school and consequently attends to *institutional representations* of *latinidad* and community, which can shed light on the various pressures ethnolinguistic organisations are under. More generally, by investigating the ways in which social actors express ethnic affiliation and characterise group membership, this study speaks to ongoing debates about multiculturalism and the integration of migrants and their children in British society (cf. speeches made the then Conservative Prime Minister, Cameron 2011a and 2011b).

The analysis is informed by an intersectional outlook, which means that discursive positions are conceptualised as being shaped by intersecting structures of difference such as ethnicity/race, social position, and gender in multiple social hierarchies. Its theoretical framework combines sociological theories about stratification from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (cultural capital) and Beverley Skeggs (respectability), with concepts from migration studies, political science, linguistic anthropology, and cultural studies (such as transnationalism, ethnopolitics, language ideologies, and tropicalism), thus expanding the theoretical reach of the existing research on Latin Americans in London. Overall this study makes an original contribution to knowledge by (a) presenting new empirical data on members of an under-researched migrant group, and (b) combining theories from different disciplines, in order to operationalize and develop the concept of *latinidad* in the London context.

Finally it is also important to highlight what this thesis is not. Despite the focus on bilingual speakers, this is not a study of code-switching / translanguaging; nor does it contribute to the variationist literature on the different forms of Spanish and the values attached to them (e.g. Corona 2012; Zentella 2008). In addition, although the main fieldsite was a complementary school, this is not a study of pedagogical practices and classroom interactions (cf. Blackledge & Creese 2010). Instead, this thesis is concerned with how institutional and intersubjective representations of *latinidad* are produced discursively, by

¹² See Mas Giralt’s (2011) for a study of incorporation and belonging among Latino families in the North of England.

contextualising them within local, global, and translocal ideologies. It is not intended to be comprehensive in any way or to speak for a ‘whole community.’ Instead it aims to be a qualitative, exploratory, illuminative study, whose claims are situated but can nevertheless shed light on wider processes of representation and differentiation among migrant groups.

1.3.2 Methodology

In order to develop a complex and contextualised understanding of people’s discourses, an ethnographic approach was chosen. Such an approach made it possible to get to know participants over time, in order to understand the meaning they attached to actions and events and how they made sense out of the world in which they lived (Spradley 1979:5). The choice of methodology was also motivated by the affordances of ethnography, namely its flexibility and responsiveness to changing research conditions. This meant that the research design and research questions were seen as emergent, in other words, that there was a methodological commitment to respond to issues as they arose and to adapt the analytical focus accordingly. As a result, the empirical chapters in this study (Chapters 4, 5, and 6) seek to address pressing and in some cases unexpected issues that surfaced during fieldwork. The final research questions were formulated as a result of sustained and simultaneous engagement with the field and the literature; these are introduced in Chapter 2, where they are situated in their theoretical context.

As was evidenced in the discussion about the meaning of ‘Latin American,’ language is more than a means of communication about reality: it is a tool for constructing reality (Spradley 1979:17). Positing language as a social practice which re/produces culture, this thesis pays particular attention to the construction of language use in representations of ethnic groupness, since “paying attention to the way in which people use language, and to their perceptions of how they and their peers use language, is fundamental to developing an understanding of how cultures and ethnicities are constituted and enacted” (Harris 2006:90). Given the opportunities it presented for investigating processes of ethnic affiliation and representation, as well as ethnically-related language use, data collection was centred in and around a Spanish-language Latin American complementary school, *Escuela Latino Americana* (‘Latin American School,’ henceforth referred to as ELA).

Data collection started in October 2008 and ended in July 2011. It involved attendance at fourteen main community events across London, participant-observation at ELA over the course of fifteen months, and several visits to three family homes. Twenty-five semi-structured interviews were recorded with adolescents and parents. Sixteen of these involved

students, former students, parents, and staff from ELA, while four were carried out with six adolescents (three boys and three girls) studying at a further education college. In addition, snowball sampling facilitated five interviews with four mothers and one adolescent girl, as well as many informal conversations with people who identified as members of the Latin American community in London, including four women involved with LAWRS (three workers and one service user). Participant-observation was also carried out over a period of one month in Colombia. Overall most of the participants in this study happened to be Colombian and female.

A key part of the ethnographic endeavour is to be able to “come as close as ethically appropriate to our subjects’ cultural experience” and to “[participate] in as many social events as possible” (Duranti 1997:89). Thus the decision was taken to conduct conversations in the preferred language of participants, which, given my language proficiency, could only be in Spanish or English (and not Portuguese). As a result, this study solely involves participants who had migrated or were descendent from Spanish-speaking parts of Latin America (in effect, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, and Chile), thus excluding Brazilians.

1.3.3 Overview of contents

Chapter 1 has situated this study within the existing literature on Latin Americans in London and has identified how it contributes to it. It has sought to complicate the idea of ‘the Latin American community’ by questioning the term ‘Latin American,’ and exploring how it is represented differently in terms of status, characteristics, and image. It has accounted for the choice of methodology and outlined the general aims of the thesis.

The aim of Chapter 2 is to summarise and critique the relevant literature and introduce the research questions that will guide each analytical chapter. It starts by arguing that studying an ‘ethnic group’ is a valid project – provided that issues such as reification and methodological nationalism are taken into account. The chapter starts by contextualising the object of study, by situating London as a global city, giving an historical overview of migration from Latin America to London, and detailing some of the transnational practices of Latin Americans. It then discusses different theoretical perspectives on ethnicity, describing how theoretical questions have concrete repercussions for Latin Americans in London; in particular it examines how Latin American activists have engaged in politics of representation by campaigning for ethnic recognition. Next, it explores the theoretical and concrete ramifications of a language ideological discourse, with the aim of examining how

ethnicity and language can become ideologically tied together and how the language practices of ethnic minorities are conceptualised as a result. It then explores the gendered dimension of migration and makes the case for analysing the construction of a gendered social imaginary by focusing on representational intersectionality. Overall, this chapter outlines how this thesis adopts an anti-essentialist, processual view of ethnicity, language, and gender, which emphasises their constructed-ness and contingency, whilst recognising that ethnic, linguistic, and gendered ascriptions (of self and others) remain a powerful way for the government to categorise populations and for individuals to self-identify, as well as to affiliate with and to disassociate themselves from others.

Chapter 3 argues for the choice of an ethnographic approach for researching the plurality and the situatedness of meanings that people ascribe to social practices. It constructs the process of data collection as a journey, from a state characterised by a lack of contacts and knowledge, to a position of connectedness and precise focus. It starts by discussing ethnographic methods, specifying ethical procedures, and outlining the original research design, before detailing how the latter was adapted as a result of the unpredictable nature of fieldwork. It describes initial entry into the field, including access to an FE college, and explains how a Latin American complementary school, ELA, was chosen as main fieldsite. It provides detailed descriptions of field relations with students and staff, as well as key informant families. It also describes subsidiary aspects of fieldwork, including a visit to Colombia. Throughout it aims to account for methodological choices contextually, and to reflect on the implications of rapport and positionality for data collection. Finally it provides an overview of the overall sample and of data collection, and documents how the data were filtered and processed.

Having considered the theoretical implications and methodological process of studying Latin Americans in London in Chapters 2 and 3, this study then moves on to the description and analysis of the data in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Chapter 4 focuses on how a Latin American institution, ELA, represented its ‘target group,’ the Latin American community, and its purpose, in four official and public texts. These texts are descriptions of the school found on the Charity Commission website, on the Local Authority website, in the Local Authority Supplementary School Directory, and in an article published by think-tank Civitas. The chapter demonstrates that ELA drew on the status of the Latin American community in London as a Black and ethnic minority (which is therefore associated with economic disadvantage, potential underachievement, and lack of

integration), as well as the desirability of Latin American cultural and linguistic heritage, in order to appeal to potential funders and service users. Thus, it argues that, in a challenging and competitive ethno-political context, the school was able to maximise its claims to legitimacy by highlighting its credentials as an ethnic minority charity, a Latin American community project, and a language school catering for the general public. In addition, it argues that the representations in this chapter can be seen as a manifestation of community efforts to obtain more visibility and more recognition, in strategic, social, and economic terms.

Chapter 5 then pursues some of the issues raised in the previous chapter, notably to what extent the proficiency in and use of Spanish are constructed as essential parts of Latin American heritage and actualised ethnic identity. This chapter starts by describing ELA's ethnolinguistic project, before exploring how the language practices and rationales of parents and children did not always match the project of the school. It finds that language ideologies formed the basis of evaluative and stratifying discourses about Latin American parents, whereby the choice to orient towards Spanish or English within the family was read in terms of ethnic authenticity, loyalty, and betrayal. It also finds that, following the positioning of ELA as a language school opened to the general public, the school community reflected the super-diverse nature of London. It argues that, for ethno-political reasons, the presence of families whose profile did not correspond to the ethnolinguistic mission of the school was erased in its day-to-day discourse, and that the disjuncture between the pluralist pragmatism of the school (appealing to all) and its commitment to a specific community (Spanish-speaking Latin Americans) caused some tensions.

Chapter 6 then moves away from the institutional setting of ELA and attends to the ways in which Latinas were represented intersubjectively. As most of the participants in this study were female, a significant amount of conversations related to the body, femininity, and to how Latinas (both in London and in Latin America) were reported to look and behave, and what they were deemed to value. The chapter starts by describing the crowning of Tara, a Latina Londoner, as national beauty queen. It does this in order to extract, from the media coverage and supporters' reactions, an ethnicising discourse according to which Latinas are attractive and sexy, which brings pride and recognition to the community. It then analyses to what extent participants aligned with this discourse and how they described being Latina, and assessed Latinas, in relation to practices linked to appearance and beautification, as well as dancing and sexuality. This chapter finds that performances of Latina femininities were contested and plural, and evaluated in terms of authenticity and respectability. It argues that

the representations of London Latinas need to be contextualised within Latin American patriarchal norms, and as well as the current sexualisation of culture and objectification of women in the UK. Furthermore it makes the case for theorising some of these representations in terms of an 'Excessive Latina', which is similar to the stereotype of the Essex Girl, arguing that, in both cases, these are pathologising discourses about lower-class femininities. It also shows how feminine beautification was linked to aspirational discourses.

Finally, Chapter 7 pulls together the theoretical and empirical strands of this study. It starts by synthesising the empirical findings related to ELA and to Latinas, highlighting how these contribute to relevant literatures. It then outlines how this study has operationalised the concept of *latinidad* and developed it in relation to the theory of capital in the London context. It ends by making recommendations for further research that could build on this study.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical perspectives on ethnicity, language, gender, and migration in a global city

2.1 Introduction

Setting out to study ‘Latin Americans in London’ – in other words, an ethnic group in a given location – can be seen as problematic. Although ethnic groups have constituted a basic unit of analysis in the social sciences, this development has not been without critics. For instance Carter & Fenton (2009) argue that there are significant problems with the “ethnicisation of sociology”, such as the definition of the group, the assumption of groupness, and the implied explanatory framework (by which they refer to the assumption that the ‘ethnic variable’ forms an important part of an explanation, such as the distribution of students in Higher Education (HE), when the actually operative causal factors are educational values and social support, for example). There is also a risk that what constitutes a commonsensical folk conceptualisation (e.g. Latin Americans form a community with identifiable characteristics) is both unquestioningly accepted and ontologically reinforced by researchers. Through its iteration in public discourses, the ethnic group acquires enduring features and definite boundaries: it becomes reified as a culture-bearing group, with shared culture, traditions and values. Thus the slippage from theoretical category to ‘real’ group is refracted in the slippage from ‘group’ to ‘community’. As Jacobs et al. (2009:71) put it, the use of ethnic categories is performative in that it “reinforces the ethnicisation and racialization of society; [o]nce they are socially constructed, these categories gain their own life.”

Furthermore, the focus on ethnic groups as objects of study needs to be placed within the context of nation-state building. Scholars such as Wimmer & Glick Schiller (2002:305-306) have criticised how the social sciences have been complicit in the national framing of modernity, taking national discourses, agendas, loyalties, and histories for granted, and reducing their analytical focus to the boundaries of the nation-state, whose project has been to define all those populations not thought to represent the ‘national culture’ as racially and culturally different, thereby producing an alterity that contributed to efforts to build unity and identity. This amounts to “methodological nationalism”, which Wimmer & Glick Schiller (2002:302) define as the assumption that the nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world. By contrast the study of ‘transnationalism’ aims to capture the movement of people, loyalties, and interests that defies the traditional nation-state model.

The methodological caveats outlined here are a good starting point for taking a *critical* approach to the study of an ethnic group. Such an approach does not deny that social actors and researchers may find and emphasise elements of shared experience (such as cultural norms and migratory trajectory), but crucially it does not *assume* commonality, cohesion, or continuity. In fact, the stance taken here is that the articulation of ethnicity is an ongoing negotiation of sameness and difference in relation to others, which creates variable and situated representations of ‘us’ and ‘them.’ Consequently, this chapter argues that ‘Latin Americans’ does not refer to a stable, homogeneous collective whose boundaries are uncontested. Instead it argues that the term is a social construct mobilised by individuals and institutions in specific social contexts, whose different layers (informed by, *inter alia*, the locality, the political configuration, the interactional situation) need to be exposed.

In line with Carter & Fenton’s (2009:7) recommendation that the task of the researcher be “to understand the key elements of the social system in which ethnic categories are implicated,” this chapter explores the construction and meaning of ethnicity in different areas of social life, and seeks to demonstrate how “ethnolinguistic identity is very much a language-ideological phenomenon in which institutionalised definitions and categories prevail” (Blommaert 2008:84). It starts by providing contextual information about Latin American migration (Section 2.2.1), London as a global city and the impact of globalisation (Section 2.2.2), and transnational practices among Latin Americans (Section 2.2.3). It then discusses different theoretical perspectives on ethnicity (Section 2.3.1), before providing an account of ethnic monitoring in the UK and of the campaigns fighting for the recognition of Latin American ethnicity (Section 2.3.2). From there it critiques language ideological discourses that state which languages migrants should speak, and why (Section 2.4). Finally, it examines the gendered nature of migration and makes the case for analysing the construction of a gendered social imaginary by focusing on representational intersectionality (Section 2.5). Overall, this chapter outlines the key theoretical concepts and research questions that will guide subsequent chapters.

2.2 London & Latin Americans

2.2.1 London as a global city

As was exemplified by the glowing words of the Deputy Mayor at the launch of Mellwaine, Cock, & Linneker’s (2011) report (cf. Section 1.2.2), London is now widely marketed as “one of the most multicultural cities of the world” (GLA 2009). Migrants may “become a marketable asset” as the city leaders “seek to attract capital and to market their

city as a globally recognised brand” (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009:189). In London, Latin Americans provide forms of cultural consumption and entertainment that add to the city’s image as a global multicultural hub. This was apparent in the Mayor’s speech during the City Hall reception marking the bicentenary of Latin American independence:

The contribution and influences of Latin American communities is vast and wonderful, from businesses, restaurants, sport, film festivals, theatre, media organisations to salsa and samba! ...

‘I am very proud that so many people from this diverse continent have chosen to make their home in London, thus enriching the life of the capital. (GLA 2010b)

The “life of the capital” is characterised by housing economic, financial, creative, and cultural centres, making London a “global city” (Sassen 2001). As such, it depends on large and ready supplies of highly educated migrants with a wide range of skills, as well as migrants who work for low wages in order to sustain the infrastructure of financial, cultural, and service industries (Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009:190). The “casualization of employment,” that has resulted in large part from the privatization of services once provided by the state, means that many jobs that were already low-paid are now even less well remunerated and much more precarious (Sassen 2001:324). Many of these positions are filled by ethnic minority groups, who are still over- and under-represented in sectors of the job market (Sassen 2001). The ethnicisation and segmentation of the labour market is visible in the over-representation of Latin Americans in the cleaning industry (cf. Section 1.1.2).

In Britain generally and in London more specifically, the presence of more migrants from more places, entailing more socio-cultural differences, going through more migration channels, and who maintain more intensely an array of links with places of origin and diasporas elsewhere, has led Vertovec (2007a:23) to speak of ‘super-diversity.’ Conveying the diversity, not just *of* groups, but *within* groups, this super-diversity is distinguished by a dynamic interplay of variables: country of origin, migration channel, legal status, migrants’ human capital, access to employment, locality, and responses by local authorities, service providers, and local residents (Vertovec 2007b). The different channels of migration and the myriad legal statuses that arise from them are often just as, or even more, crucial than shared ethnicity or country of origin with reference to: group formation, living arrangements, duration of stay, autonomy, family regroupment, and use of public services; moreover, immigration status is an important catalyst in the formation of social capital (ibid.).

New technologies, cheaper telecommunication and travel, and an increasingly globalised economy have enabled migrants to “[retain and develop] their cultural and economic links with their homelands, including (in some cases) their political loyalties and commitments” (Jordan & Düvell 2003:76). To reflect the increasingly globalised flows of people, capital,

information, and communication that are re-shaping traditional patterns of migration, migrants are no longer only defined in terms of how much they have assimilated or acculturated. Instead of forming part of conventional immigrant communities, many migrants are more likely to inhabit “transnational social spaces” (Basch, Glick Schiller & Blanc 1994). For Brah (1996:208), the movement of capital and culture and the crossing of borders all contribute to the creation of “diasporic space,” where multiple subject positions are juxtaposed, contested, proclaimed or disavowed. This idea of people and resources being in motion underlies the concept of deterritorialization, which denotes a loosening of the ties between cultural reproduction and place. Deterritorialization also affects the loyalties of groups (especially in the context of complex diasporas), their transnational manipulation of currencies and other forms of wealth and investment, and the strategies of states (Appadurai 1996:49).

Transnational migration impacts not only on physical movement and economic/political/cultural involvement, but also on perspective. For people who have experienced life in different countries, it may no longer be relevant to speak of belonging to ‘a place’, ‘a culture.’ Transnational families tell stories of locational volatility and changing social identification and nationalities; their attitudes to place are highly varied, ambiguous, and subject to change (Bryceson and Vuorela 2002:6-7). There have been several attempts by scholars to capture the complex outlook of transnational migrants with new terminology. Blommaert et al. (2005:85) use the concept of “polycentricity” to refer to the “simultaneous orientations to different ‘centres’ of authority and normativity.” Suggesting that the transnational habitus incorporates the social position of the migrant and the context in which transmigration occurs, Guarnizo (1997) evokes the “dual frame of reference” through which migrants constantly compare their situation in their ‘home’ society to their situation in the ‘host’ society (cited in Vertovec 2004:974). Taking up Rouse’s (1992) concept of ‘bifocality,’ Vertovec (2004:977) describes it as a dual orientation that is hard to measure, but whose workings are clearly discernable in social practices and conveyed in individual narratives.

2.2.2 Latin American migration to London

On 2nd September 2010, the GLA celebrated two hundred years of Latin American independence by hosting a reception at City Hall, during which the Mayor drew attention to the events that linked Latin America and London at the beginning of the nineteenth century:

Historically too, many of the key figures in the freedom movement chose London as their home. It was from this city that revolutionaries such as Simon Bolivar, Francisco de Miranda and Jose de San Martin honed their plans and ideas for revolution and independence! (GLA 2010b)

Besides Britain serving as a refuge for political exiles, the links between Latin American and London have primarily had to do with trade. The absence of “immediately obvious historical links with the UK” (McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:4) has meant that Latin Americans have traditionally migrated to the USA, where “Latinos / Hispanics” are said to constitute 16% of the population (USA Census Bureau 2010).¹³ The category ‘Latinos’ illustrates how, as mentioned in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.1), the process of migration can lead to panethnic identification:

Panethnicity develops through distinct processes of *ascription*, *accommodation* and *identification*.

Panethnic labels typically originate in *ascription* by outsiders who fail to recognize the diverse origins within the group and see them as homogenous (Cornell 1988; Espiritu 1992). *Accommodation* often follows, as individuals within the group initially assume the panethnic label to conform to outsiders’ expectations. This does not imply acceptance of those labels, but the need to interact with a society that organizes itself around such classifications. However, panethnic groupings also serve as a basis for political mobilization. As ethnic groups organize around their common structural conditions, they create or enhance the cultural solidarity that leads to panethnic *identification*. (Roth 2009:930)

Due to the tightening of visa regimes in the USA, together with widespread poverty and economic hardship caused by the recession, migrants from Latin America have been increasingly choosing to move to Europe and particularly to Spain, before possibly moving on to the UK (Pellegrino 2004; IOM 2005).¹⁴ In the UK they may have found themselves in an uncomfortable position as the first significant cohort of non-Commonwealth overseas migrants, with their positionality further complicated by the reality that many arrived from Southern European countries and carried European rights with them (Bailey & Mas Giralt 2011:24).

Although it is much smaller than in Spain, the presence of Latin American immigrants in the UK is nonetheless an established phenomenon. In the 1960s and 1970s, the repression of military governments led to the creation of exile communities of Chileans, Argentines, Uruguayans, and Bolivians in London (McIlwaine 2007:5). In addition, in the early 1970s, Latin Americans (mainly Colombians) started to arrive in the UK with work permits to work

¹³ On the sociohistorical distinctions between the labels ‘Latino’ and ‘Hispanic,’ see Laó-Montes (2001:4-5), and Oboler (1995).

¹⁴ However recent figures suggest that the current economic crisis may be affecting this trend as large numbers of Latin Americans have been reported to leave Spain, where the rise in unemployment has been particularly severe (ABC 03/12/11).

in hotels and restaurants and as cleaners in public buildings (McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:13). In the 1980s, Latin Americans continued to arrive for family reunions, as students, and in some cases as refugees. The growing number of exiles and economic migrants was reflected in the establishment of migrant organizations, such as Carila (Campaign Against Repression in Latin America) in 1977 and LAWRS in 1978, and groups set up to campaign for the rights of Latin Americans in the UK (McIlwaine 2007; McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011). In the early 1990s, the drug wars and armed conflict in Colombia caused substantial population displacement and exodus; in the UK, previous Colombian migrants facilitated travel, lodging and working arrangements for new arrivals, while a relatively generous asylum policy allowed many to remain, generating a ripple effect through which many Colombians managed to settle legally through family reunification and marriage (Cock 2009:100). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the Latin American population in London grew significantly, as asylum seekers and economic migrants fled from political and economic instability (McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:13). Since 2000, the population has continued to expand, notably with the influx of students and professionals from Latin America, and secondary migration from other European Union countries; the increasing immigration restrictions also make it more likely for these recent arrivals to have an irregular status (McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:14).

In contrast to the large numbers who migrated from the colonies and the Commonwealth in the post-war era, Latin Americans tend to be part of London's "new migrants" (Kyambi 2005). Although there has been a consensus that the Latin American population in London is under-reported and growing (Block 2006, 2008; James 2005; McIlwaine 2007, 2010; McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011), estimates regarding its size have varied enormously: from 32,198 (GLA, no date) to 300,000 (Block 2008:5). The FCO (2007:5) estimates that there are between 700,000 and 1 million Latin Americans in the UK, the majority of who are thought to live in the London area. Consequently, McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker's (2011:7) claim to have produced the first "robust" estimate of the Latin American population in London is significant; their figure of 113,500 Latin Americans in 2008 includes regular, irregular and second generation groups. In addition, their study found that Latin Americans constitute a diverse group made up, in decreasing order of size, of Brazilians, Colombians, Ecuadorians, Bolivians, and Peruvians as the main nationalities.

2.2.3 Transnational practices among Latin Americans

Rather than forsaking their homelands, migrants have strengthened their commitments and contributions to them; transnational relations have become ubiquitous and undeniably significant for immigrants' incorporation, since they influence their conception of their relationship with positionality in the new land (Guarnizo et al. 1999:369). In London, "the degrees and ways in which today's migrants maintain identities, activities and connections linking them with communities outside Britain are unprecedented" (Vertovec 2007a:23). The transnational engagement of Latin Americans in London is visible in the success of businesses that facilitate money transfers and telecommunications, and provide imported food from Latin America. Several charities, such as Children Of The Andes and the Anglo-Latin American Foundation, raise money in London for projects in Latin America. In terms of workers' unions, the Latin American Workers' Association is primarily based in London but maintains contacts with trade unions in Latin America (Però 2008). The Latino directory *Páginas Latinas* lists more than twenty Latin American or Hispanic churches. Among these the Latin American Chaplaincy, which has branches in Elephant and Castle and Seven Sisters, offers services in Spanish in six churches and celebrates Latin American events such as the *Día de las Américas*.¹⁵ In some cases the Latin American transnational network is characterised by a triangular connection between the Americas and Europe. For instance, free newspaper *Express News* is printed in London, Miami, and Madrid; it is aimed not only at a local readership, but at a wider diaspora.

This diaspora is likely to include family members dispersed over Latin America, the USA, and Europe. The geographical separation of family members may be strategic (for example, one spouse works abroad in order to sustain the family back home) or waiting to be resolved through family regrouping (i.e., various family members attempt to migrate to a host country in different stages). For Latin Americans living in London, migration will often be inseparable from family dispersal, whether it occurred to follow a relative already established in the capital or whether it means leaving family members behind. As is the case in other parts of the world, such as the Philippines, it is not uncommon for a mother to leave her child in Latin America, in the care of grandparents or aunts/uncles, in order to work in the UK. Years later, her child may join her in London, where she might have started another family. On transnational families, Orellana et al. note that:

Parents who leave their children behind or send them abroad worry that their children will suffer physically and emotionally in their absence, but they separate from them in

¹⁵ The 'Day of the Americas', otherwise known as Columbus Day in the USA and *Día de la Raza* (Day of the Race) in most Latin American countries, commemorates the anniversary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas. It is interesting to note how in Latin American countries, the focus is on celebrating *race*, that is, the extensive miscegenation that took place in the Americas. I will return to the *Día de las Americas* in Chapter 5, 5.2.2.

order to provide for them in other ways. Transnational families challenge mainstream constructions of “motherhood” (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997) and “households” (Olwig 1999), as well as middle-class assumptions that all the needs of children can and should be provided by parents in nuclear families based in one community. (Orellana et al. 2001:587)

In the next section, I look at how ethnicity has been theorised, represented, and reified in the contexts of academia, government classification, political activism, and popular discourses.

2.3 Ethnicity

2.3.1 Theoretical perspectives on ethnicity

Michel Foucault’s (1969, 2001) great contribution to epistemology – to direct the analytic gaze onto the *historicity* of categorisation – is particularly relevant to the study of ethnicity, where it is arguably impossible not to consider the constitution and circulation of knowledges and discourses, and how these are related to power. Historically, perceptions and discourses of racial difference have been used to legitimate aggression against and exploitation of other people, perhaps most horrifically during colonisation and slavery. Research on the official practices of ethnic and racial categorisation has underlined how colonial rule transformed antecedent patterns of social identification and shaped patterns of ethnic mobilisation through the identification, labelling, and differential treatment of ethnic groups (Brubaker 2004:67). If the word ‘race’ has now become stigmatised because of its racist connotations, the term ‘ethnicity’ has proliferated – both in academia and in common parlance – partly as a result of rapid processes of social change which have created new postcolonial nations and massive migrations (Wade 1997:16). (However, the term ‘ethnicity’ is not detached from crimes against humanity, as the more recent cases of ‘ethnic cleansing’ in Eastern Europe and Africa can attest.) In this section, I chart, in broad strokes, the theoretical move from primordial and essentialist to relational and processual accounts of ethnicity.

Primordial accounts view ethnicity as a given, an inescapable result of ancestry. One belongs to an ethnic group because of one’s parents and, as such, one inherits physical and cultural characteristics and an attachment to both a place and a collective, be it a tribe or a diasporic community. From this perspective, “[e]thnicity strains toward a self-contained, self-sufficient, culturally autonomous basis of aggregation, i.e. it strains toward and is experienced as being societally complete, inter-generationally continuous and historically deep” (Fishman 1989:5). In turn, the ossification of a group identity can result in what Gilroy terms ‘ethnic absolutism’, that is:

a reductive, essentialist understanding of ethnic and national difference which operates through an absolute sense of culture so powerful that it is capable of separating people off from each other and diverting them into social and historical locations that are understood to be mutually impermeable and incommensurable'. (Gilroy 1993:65)

The work of social anthropologist Fredrik Barth (1969) was pivotal for undermining this fixed and primordial view of ethnicity. From his empirical findings, he was able to extrapolate that ethnic distinctions depended on social interactions and acceptance, rather than essential characteristics. This had profound implications for the conceptualisation of ethnicity in the social sciences for it meant that "although ethnic categories take cultural differences into account, we can assume no simple one-to-one relationship between ethnic units and cultural similarities and differences" (ibid. p.14). Hence, Barth's work was important for shifting the focus on the articulation of *boundaries*, rather than "the cultural stuff that [they enclose]" (ibid. p.15). His work defines ethnicity as *socially constructed*, a theoretical progression further developed by the work of cultural theorist Stuart Hall, who argued for:

the recognition of this extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experiences and cultural identities which compose the category 'black'; that is, the recognition that 'black' is essentially a politically and culturally *constructed* category, which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed transcultural or transcendental racial categories and which therefore has no guarantees in Nature. (Stuart Hall [1988] 1992:254)

Hall's concept of "new ethnicities" highlights the potential plurality and heterogeneity of ethnic experience, and shifts attention away from biological determinism and onto individual agency and contextual differences. In sum, analytically speaking, ethnicity is not an identity given by nature, but an identification created through social action (Baumann 1999:21). For Phil Cohen (1999:5), "the notion of new ethnicities referred to myriad forms of cultural traffic generated by the process of globalisation, and the convergence of transnational and transracial geographies of identification via the opening up of new diasporic networks of communication." Thus, in the current context of increased mobility and mixing, a person's affiliations may be influenced by, inter alia, migration, relationships, and technological affordances.¹⁶ The resultant "cultures of hybridity" (Hall 1992; Mercer 1994) have been widely embraced as a way to encapsulate the dynamic processes of ethnic and cultural identification taking place in multicultural contexts.

¹⁶ See, for example, Golash-Boza & Darity 2008, whose findings suggest that Latinas' and Latinos' skin colour and experiences of discrimination affect whether people from Latin America and their descendants who live in the USA will choose to identify racially as Black, White or Latina/o.

As a result, ethnicity has increasingly been viewed as something realised, to various degrees, through practice. Thus, Baumann (1999:21) points to a certain flexibility in ethnic identification when saying that “[just] as people emphasise different aspects of their language, body language, behaviour, and style in different situations, so too do they emphasise or abjure the attributes of their ethnicity,” which leads social scientists to talk of “shifting identity” or “contextual ethnicity.” Thus, a teenager of Latin American descent living in London may position herself as Latina at family reunions, as a South London girl at school, and as a non-European/ non-White young person with some of her friends. Nevertheless, amid this social constructionist talk of fluid, changeable ethnic identities, is there a risk that too much emphasis is laid on an individual’s agency and choice, thus obscuring wider ideological processes? In fact, May (2001) argues that much of the current work in the social sciences about hybridity and third places is an overstatement and questions how much choice individuals really have, when individual and collective choices are circumscribed by the ethnic categories available at any given time and place.

The issues outlined so far are particularly salient in the case of Latin American migrants. The notion of ‘Latin American ethnicity’ defies essentialisation; for Media Studies scholar Angharad Valdivia, Latina/os continue to challenge binary and essentialist approaches to race and demonstrate what she calls “radical hybridity”:

[T]he dominant tendency to reduce Latina/o heterogeneity to a brown race erases the diversity within Latina/os. Latina/os come from South America yet South America is not a racially homogeneous region – Native American, European, African, Arab, and Asian traces permeate the region in addition to the more often mentioned particular Spanish and Portuguese traces. In addition every one of these categories, or regions, or people is composed of hybrid populations. (Valdivia 2004, no page)

For Valdivia (*ibid.*), it is nearly impossible to classify Latina/os by race, ethnicity, class, religion, language, food, dance and musical proclivities. Furthermore, as highlighted by May, the question of which ethnic categories are presented to individuals is an important one. Latin American migrants are likely to encounter different systems of ethnic classification in their country of origin and their host country (Golash-Boza & Darity 2008; Wade 1997). In the USA, processes of panethnic ascription and identification have led to the widespread use of the terms ‘Hispanic’ and ‘Latino,’ in areas such as the media, marketing, and community activism. At the same time, these labels have been criticised for conveying a simplified, homogenised reality and suggesting an assumed togetherness which obscures

considerable differences (cf. Zentella 2005).¹⁷ The problem is, as Brubaker puts it, that much talk about ethnic groups is obscured by the failure to distinguish between groups and categories:

If by ‘group’ we mean a mutually interacting, mutually recognising, mutually oriented, effectively communicating, bounded collectivity with a sense of solidarity, corporate identity and capacity for concerted action ... it should be clear that a category is not a group. (Brubaker 2004:12)

In addition, labels may also be understood to denote a certain social status. For instance, Beserra (2004) found that Brazilian migrants and immigrants in Southern California declined to identify themselves as Hispanics or Latinos, perceiving these superficial and largely externally imposed categories as a stigma that inhibits their own prospects for better class positioning in U.S. society (Kearney & Beserra 2004:8). In subsequent chapters, attention will be paid to how social actors negotiate essentialisation, hybridity, and boundaries in their discursive representations of ethnicity.

Turning now to the British and London contexts, I look in more depth at the very questions raised in this section: (a) the availability of ethnic categories, (b) the desirability of panethnic labels, (c) the tension between groups and categories, and, in the case of Latin American migrants, (d) the repercussions of assigning specific features to an ethnic group and (e) the intersectionality between ethnicity and gender and/or social position.

2.3.2 Ethnopolitics

Ethnic monitoring in the UK

The power of the state, Bourdieu has argued, is at the heart of how categorisations become authoritative: “through the framing it imposes on practices, the state establishes and inculcates common forms and categories of perception and appreciation, social frameworks of perceptions, of understanding or of memory, in short state forms of classification” (1994:13). In the UK the government’s efforts to categorise the population according to their ethnicity are linked to legislation and policy interventions. Thus, the Equal Opportunities framework was designed to remove the obstacles of prejudice, discrimination and institutional racism (Fenton & Bradley 2002:27). More specifically, the Race Relations

¹⁷ Heath & McLaughlin (1993:21) note that, in the USA: “Those who migrated from Mexico, Central and South America and the Caribbean, as well as those with years of residence in the United States, debated the use of terms such as Hispanic, Latino, and Chicano. Others who might be so generically labelled preferred specific terms to identify their homes as Puerto Rico, Mexico, or a specific Caribbean island. Controversy among these groups left the general public confused about the appropriate choice of labels.”

(Amendment) Act 2000 gives public authorities a general duty to promote race equality, which involves ethnic monitoring. Following, *inter alia*, the recommendations of the Rampton (1981) and Swann (DES 1985) reports, which found that specific ethnic minority students were at risk of underachieving at school, local authorities must collect and analyse ethnic group data about all their students, so that the government can assess the impact that their policies have across ethnic groups (DCSF, no date). Among the measures taken as a result of the Swann Report, the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant was introduced as a response to the perceived disparities in educational achievement related to ethnicity.¹⁸ The relevance of this situation – whereby belonging to an ‘ethnic minority’ is regarded as having implications for a child’s schooling – for the Latin American population in London will be examined in Chapter 4.

The most systematic and comprehensive attempt by the UK government to gauge the ethnic distribution of the population is the decennial national census. An ethnic group question was first included in the England and Wales census in 1991, with the primary aims of enabling organisations to monitor equal opportunities and anti-discrimination policies, and to allocate government resources more effectively; while the development of the ethnic group question for the 2011 census is interlinked with that of the newly introduced national identity question (ONS 2009:4). Among the “census partners,” the Office for National Statistics (ONS) identifies “ethnic minorities,” who, in theory, benefit from the census insofar as:

[An accurate census] means that government funding and resources will be shared fairly among different parts of the country and that services at local level are relevant to all the people who live there. ... Minority groups make up a substantial part of the population, each expressing slightly different needs. (ONS 2011)

That each minority group has “different needs” may betray an essentialising discourse which constructs groups as distinct and homogeneous. In fairness, the ONS recognises that “collecting data on ethnicity is difficult because of the subjective, multi-faceted and changing nature of ethnic identification and there is no consensus on what constitutes an ‘ethnic group’” (ONS 2003). The ONS has sought to use categories that are most meaningful to people in Britain, although these vary enormously in their geographical and racial remit.

¹⁸ “Some minority ethnic groups (namely Chinese, Indian and Mixed White & Asian) consistently perform above the average for all pupils across the Key Stages. On the other hand, some minority ethnic groups (namely Gypsy/Roma, Traveller of Irish heritage, White & Black Caribbean, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean and Other Black) consistently perform below the average for all pupils across the Key Stages. ... Controlling for other factors that impact upon attainment, pupils from most minority ethnic groups make better progress across school than White British pupils with the same levels of prior attainment. However, the Gypsy/Roma, Traveller of Irish Heritage and White & Black Caribbean pupils make less progress than similar White British pupils across all phases of education.” (DCSF 2006)

For instance, in the 2011 Census (cf. Figure 2.1), the categories on offer in response to the question “What is your ethnic group?” reveal a conflation of ‘race’ (“White”, “Black”), nationality (“Bangladeshi”, “Pakistani”), and area (“Caribbean”), sometimes put in very vague terms (“Asian”, “African”).

16 What is your ethnic group?

➡ Choose **one** section from A to E, then tick **one** box to best describe your ethnic group or background

A White

☐ English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British

☐ Irish

☐ Gypsy or Irish Traveller

☐ Any other White background, write in

B Mixed / multiple ethnic groups

☐ White and Black Caribbean

☐ White and Black African

☐ White and Asian

☐ Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background, write in

C Asian / Asian British

☐ Indian

☐ Pakistani

☐ Bangladeshi

☐ Chinese

☐ Any other Asian background, write in

D Black / African / Caribbean / Black British

☐ African

☐ Caribbean

☐ Any other Black/African/Caribbean background, write in

E Other ethnic group

☐ Arab

☐ Any other ethnic group, write in

Figure 2.1 Ethnic group question in the 2011 census

The inclusion of the “Mixed” category, since the 2001 census, reflects the growing proportion of the population that has more than one ethnic background. However, the

allowance for some diversity in *origin* has not been followed by diversity in *affiliation*. It is telling that the ONS webpage ‘Focus on Ethnicity and Identity’ announces that “88% of mixed group identify as British”, but a closer look at the survey options reveals that it was not possible to identify with more than one country (ONS, no date).

Some of the inherent problems with ethnic monitoring become apparent in my own mixed case. My mother is Western European (White), while my father is Indian (Brown), and I was brought up in an Anglo-French family. Although my cultural upbringing and wider frame of reference are unquestionably Western European, I don’t feel completely French or English, because people often comment on my (light brown) skin colour, which acts as a reminder of otherness (or non-European-ness). So, if I have to complete an ethnic monitoring form, like the 2011 census, I usually tick the ‘Mixed – White and Asian’ category. This label could then be construed as implying certain types of belonging and experience. However I only feel Indian inasmuch as people see me as darker than White and have never felt discriminated against because of my ethnic origins. On the contrary, in France and England, my mixed appearance has been ‘exotic enough’ to be advantageous but not alienating. Overall, I identify as mixed and relate more to people who have mixed origins – whichever their ethnic grouping. (I describe my ethnic origins here because of the impact they had on fieldwork experience, which I describe in Chapter 3, 3.4.3)

In sum, my example serves to highlight several points: (a) the impossibility of capturing variations in ethnic identification in a simple tick box form, (b) the tensions between favouring culture or appearance, self-identification or ascription, and (c) the ease with which these kind of data can be misconstrued (e.g., someone who claims a particular ethnic origin carries a related cultural heritage) or interpreted as indicative of wider phenomena (e.g., a member of an ethnic minority is more at risk of suffering from discrimination). Of course this is not to say that people do not experience prejudice or violence linked to ethnic markers, such as skin colour or accent; my example really serves to underscore the inherent difficulties with ethnicity as a classificatory and analytical category. For instance, when does a fair-skinned person of Latin American descent born in Britain identify as “White British” or as “Other Ethnic Group”? This points to the difficulty with the fact that “there is no ‘objectively’ fixed transition point – like being of the third or fifth generation of immigrants – between being part of an ethnic minority group and no longer being part of an ethnic minority group” (Jacobs et al. 2009:83). In sum, it is clear that the UK government’s determination to categorise individuals according to ethnicity is not without problems and that “a simple ethnicity-focused approach to understanding and engaging minority groups in Britain, as taken in many models and policies within conventional multiculturalism, is

inadequate and often inappropriate for dealing with immigrants' needs or understanding their dynamics of inclusion or exclusion" (Vertovec 2007:17).

This raises questions about how Londoners of Latin American origin or parentage might identify and be perceived, what kind of effect this might have on their lives, and in what ways Latin Americans form part of ethnic minority discourses – which I now turn to.

Campaign for ethnic recognition

As has just been demonstrated, ethnic identification in Britain is not a purely individual matter; on the contrary, it can become particularly salient in relations with state institutions. In fact, since government funding is tied to the size of ethnic communities (whose existence has been ascertained through the collection of statistical data), ethnicity acquires a political dimension. As a result, as Baumann (1999:33) puts it, "if ethnic belonging becomes a resource in economic competition, then ethnic radicalisation is an all but inevitable consequence" (see also Jenkins 2008; Nagel 1994:157-159). Situating the development of this practice in the 1960s, when civil rights movements were unfolding in various parts of the world, the political scientist Joseph Rothschild (1981:2) called "ethnopolitics" the process of "mobilising ethnicity from a psychological or cultural or social datum into political leverage for the purposes of altering or reinforcing ... systems of structured inequality between and among ethnic categories." Similarly, as part of what he has termed "politics of recognition," the political philosopher Charles Taylor (1997:104) has observed that race relations and discussions of multiculturalism are undergirded by the premise that withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression.¹⁹ For instance, the multiculturalist approach has argued that the lack of recognition of the cultural assets of ethnic minority students in schools is the reason behind their lack of success (Enneli 2002:142).²⁰

Consequently, for a group to exist discursively and politically, it requires to be (a) identified as an ethnic community, (b) numbered, and (c) recognised through specific funding and services (cf. Nagle 2009). To characterise individuals, not as dispersed and possibly disconnected, but as a cohesive entity is a good example of the 'politics of representation', or what Blommaert (1999:9) also describes as "the struggle [for

¹⁹ "The demand for recognition in [what is called the politics of multiculturalism] is given urgency by the supposed links between recognition and identity, where "identity" designates something like an understanding of who we are, of our fundamental defining characteristics as human beings. The thesis is our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves" (Taylor 1997:98).

²⁰ However multiculturalism has not been without its critics; for a brief review of arguments see Nagle (2009:9-10) and Petersson & Tyler (2008:232); for a case study of white backlash, see Hewitt (2005).

authoritative entextualisation which] develops usually over *definitions* of social realities: various representations of reality which are pitted against each other - discursively – with the aim of gaining authority for one particular representation” [emphasis in the original]. Blommaert also draws attention to the paradoxical situation whereby a multiethnic city like London offers a certain degree of anonymity to migrants but where

one is often also *forced* to be more [of a nationality] than ever; in schools, police offices, social welfare offices, and a range of other environments, one’s identity-of-origin is the prime criterium for inclusion or exclusion, for the definition of trajectories, for the distribution of privileges or sanctions. (Blommaert 2008:87)

In this context, it is not surprising that Latin American activists in London have been pushing for ethnic recognition, most recently by encouraging community members to identify as ‘Latin American’ in the 2011 census (see Figure 2.2).

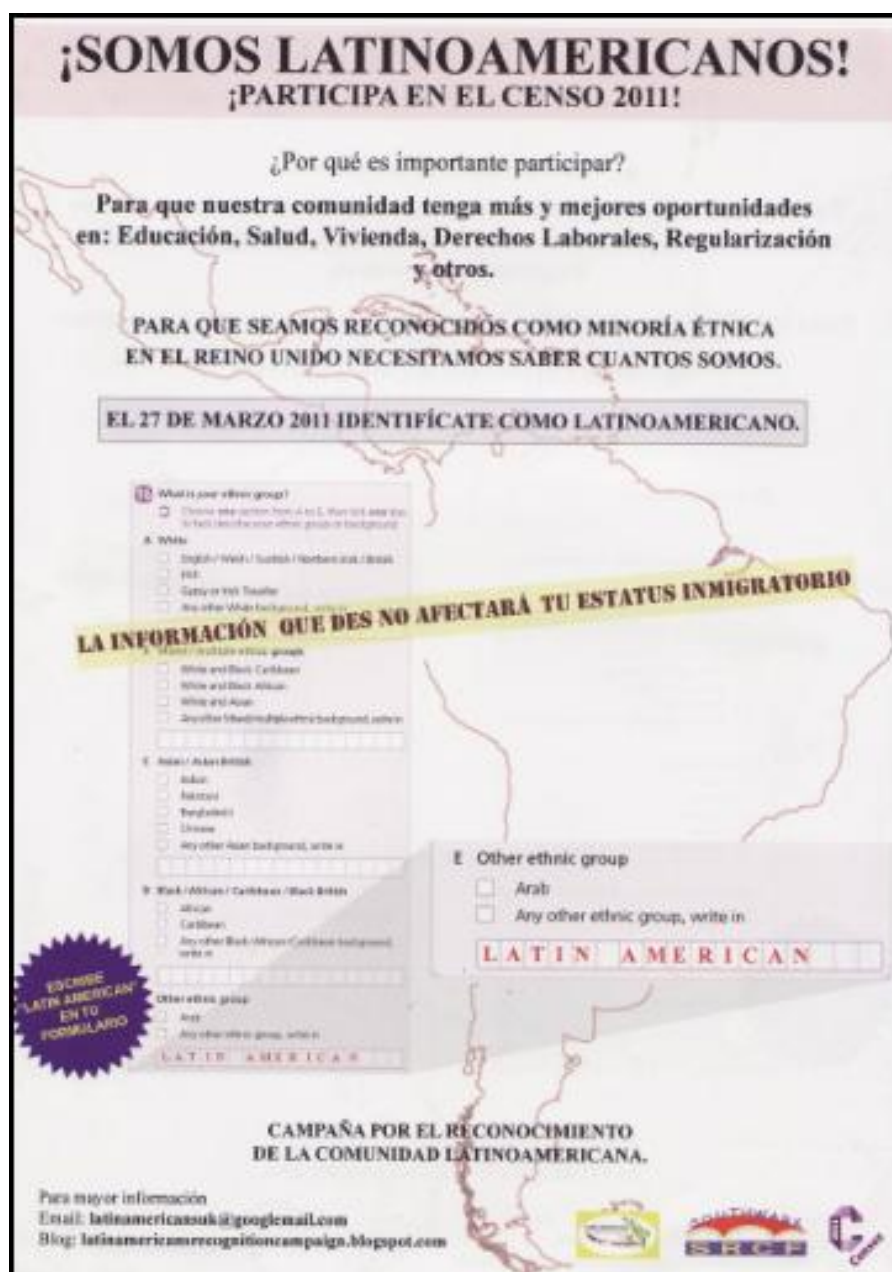


Figure 2.2 Flyer from the Latin American Recognition Campaign²¹

This campaign has been led by, inter alia, the *Alianza Iberoamericana UK* (AIU) (cf. Plate 1.1), whose ethno-political rationale is detailed in the following extract from an article located on the front page of the free bilingual newspaper *Eurolatina News* (01/08/09):

The Iberoamerican Alliance UK is an assembly of leaders, entrepreneurs and individuals [which] has become a bastion of support for Latin American immigrants,

²¹ Translation: “We are Latin American! Participate in the 2011 Census! Why is it important to participate? So that our community can have more and better opportunities in: Education, Health, Housing, Employment Rights, Regularization and others. In order for us to be recognised as an ethnic minority in the UK we need to know how many we are. On 27th March 2011, identify yourself as Latin American. The information that you give won’t affect your migratory status. Campaign for the recognition of the Latin American community.”

Spanish, Portuguese and other nationalities classed as Iberoamericans. ... there is a problem for disadvantaged immigrants who speak Spanish or Portuguese in many areas, and that is, the absence of a specific box in employment forms government application form, census etc. This means that we are NOT recognised as an ethnic group so when we fill in one of these forms we have to tick the box marked “others”. We should be regarded as the largest minority yet we are behind because we have not been identified. Local and national bodies in Britain do not know of our existence in concrete statistics, therefore they find it difficult to direct objective attention to our people in basic services such as health and education. ... it is worth noting that in the United States, Hispanic ethnicity is recognised and Spanish speakers there can gain university scholarships, are recognised as a minority, have parliamentary representation and offices in state and federal government that focus on the needs of the community.

Data extract 2.A Article by the *Alianza Iberoamericana UK*

So far, this campaign has only been partially successful. The ONS decided not to include a Latin American category in the national census because “compared to other groups being assessed, there was little evidence that [the Latin American group was] of particular policy interest or of particular interest for service delivery” (ONS 2009:28). However, as highlighted in Chapter 1 (1.2.2), the GLA has now included a ‘Latin American/Ibero-American’ category in its ethnic monitoring, although this has proved unsatisfactory for some, such as the Latin American Recognition Campaign, who do not want to be aggregated with Iberians (Spanish and Portuguese).²² Even though these internecine disputes, with their postcolonial implications, do not form part of the data analysed this thesis, they provide an insight into the strategic importance of ethnic labelling in London, an issue that will be examined further in Chapter 4. In light of the literature and related issues reviewed in this section, the research question that will guide Chapter 4 is:

How does the ethno-political context in which Latin American school ELA operates inform the ways in which it represents its purpose and target community?

2.4 Ethnicity and language

2.4.1 Language ideologies

In the previous section, I argued that essentialising perspectives on ethnicity, which construct it as a predetermined and fixed attribute, have been discredited in favour of processual perspectives, which conceive of ethnicity as relational and *potentially* multiple and flexible, notably as a result of social contact, e.g. through migration. Despite these

²² For a reflexive account of researching, inter alia, these diverse factions, see Fransman’s (2011) doctoral thesis: ‘(Re)assembling Community: The ethics of enactment in research in, on and with the Latin American/Latino/Ibero-American/Spanish-Speaking Latino/Spanish and Portuguese Speaking community in London.’

theoretical developments, an essentialised view of ethnicity was found to remain central to ethno-political discourses, especially in a context where the official classification of the population according to ethnic grouping informs government policy and serves to monitor, inter alia, the levels of discrimination, school results, and university entrance of ethnic minorities. In sum, ethnicity can be seen from perspectives that emphasise fixity or fluidity, and is still very present in public discourses, be it terms of how people self-identify or perceive others. In a similar fashion, I now propose to critically examine the notion of *language* and, particularly, to question some widespread folk perceptions about language use. I will focus on specific commonsensical statements related to indigenous and migrant communities in the UK, because they reveal *language ideologies* which inform the discourses of social actors (as will be illustrated in Chapters 4, 5, and 6).

Language ideologies are the mediating link between social structures and forms of talk (Woolard & Schieffelin 1994:55). To study linguistic ideology focuses the attention on how processes of power and inequality are realised and refracted through institutional and individual attitudes towards and beliefs about language use (cf. Gal & Irvine 1995; Irvine & Gal 2000; Kroskrity 2004; Kroskrity, Schieffelin, & Woolard 1992; Woolard & Schieffelin 1994). Kroskrity (2004:498) characterises work on language ideologies as “a body of research which simultaneously problematises speakers’ consciousness of their language and discourse as well as their positionality (in political economic systems) in shaping beliefs, proclamations, and evaluations of linguistic forms and discursive practices.” Language ideologies are apparent in the metalinguistic judgements made about the relative desirability, socio-cultural value, and aesthetic qualities of language varieties (cf. Bauer & Trudgill 1998) and are crucial in determining *language status*, which signifies, according to Haugen, the power, prestige, and influence the language possesses through the social categorisation of its speakers (Edwards 1994:88). Language ideologies are central to this thesis as they form the basis of evaluations made about speakers and their language practices, such as whether a person *can* or *should* speak in a certain way.

In the UK, a broad language ideological discourse about the language practices of indigenous people and migrants circulates. This discourse can be broken down into two segments:

- Part I In the UK, people speak English. Therefore, migrants need to speak the language properly in order to integrate and find work.
- Part II It is important that the children of migrants know how to speak their mother tongue, because it forms an important part of their heritage.

In the rest of this section, I critique each of these statements and highlight how they relate to the Latin American community in London in general and to my research in particular.

2.4.2 Language ideological discourse – Part I

“In England, people speak English”

Underlying this statement is the idea that individuals form *speech communities*, in other words, groups, traditionally delimited in geographical and political terms, who speak the same language. In Europe, the linkage between language and people can be traced back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when nation-building discourses sought to establish firm cultural and linguistic boundaries between nascent nation-states. The claimed interrelationship between language and nation was pivotal to the theorising of nationalism (Anderson 2006), whereby a linguistically united community (‘nation’), when tied to a territory, could claim to deserve a state of its own (Gal & Irvine 1995:968). Notwithstanding the import of his monograph *Imagined Communities*, Anderson has been criticised for basing his analysis on a reified conception of languages and an assumption of linguistic homogeneity (cf. Irvine & Gal 2000; Joseph 2004). In fact, this criticism has been levelled at the social sciences more generally, for their reliance on language as a way to demarcate and identify social groups, in a manner comparable to accepting the nation-state as the natural social and political form (cf. methodological nationalism in the introduction of this Chapter). Indeed, Gal & Irvine (1995:968-969) have criticised how “within the social sciences, the persistent use of language as a synecdoche for community relies unquestioningly on the supposedly natural correlation of one language with one culture.” Likewise, Pratt (1987:50) argues that the speech community, linguistics’ imagined object of study, mirrors Anderson’s prototype of the modern nation as imagined community. She condemns what she calls the “linguistics of community” for viewing social difference as constituted by distance and separation rather than by ongoing contact and structured relations in a shared social space, while Rampton (2005:1) views the linguistics of community as an “example of a much more general discourse of ethnic absolutism.” Consequently, it is important to acknowledge that social scientists have been instrumental in the reification of speech communities (Irvine & Gal 2000; see also Bucholtz 2003 on strategic essentialism in sociolinguistics), and that the idea of “one people/one language” is a political one.

To return to the language ideological discourse outlined above, what do we mean when we say that “people speak English”? *Which* English do we mean: Black, playground, academic?²³ Referring to ‘a’ language suggests that it is unitary, used in the same way by

²³ Other possible varieties include “community English” (Hewitt 1992:32), ESOL, ENL (English spoken as a native language), ESL (English spoken as a second language), EFL (English spoken as a foreign language), World English, and global English (cf. Pennycook 2007).

people, thus smoothing over the considerable variations in, *inter alia*, vernacular, register, pronunciation.²⁴ Talking of ‘English,’ while tacitly referring to the standard form, also obscures wider ideological processes through which regional or ethnically marked forms are devalued or derided.²⁵ In fact, the boundaries between the variant elevated to the standard form (‘language’) and other variants (‘dialects’) have been shown to be socially constructed (Anderson 2006; Bourdieu 2001; Irvine & Gal 2000).²⁶

The phrase “People speak English” also elides how they may belong to several speech networks (Fishman 1972:50). Research on stylisation (e.g. Bucholtz 1999; Sebba 1993) has demonstrated that speakers may conduct subtle switches between socially-coded forms of speech (e.g., African American Vernacular English, Standard English, Cockney), in order to signal shifts in interactional alignment. They can thereby be seen to be performing “acts of identity” (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985), through which:

The individual creates for himself the patterns of his linguistic behaviour so as to resemble those of the group or groups with which from time to time he wishes to be identified, or so as to be unlike those from whom he wishes to be distinguished. (Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985:181)

From this perspective, decisions to change languages/dialects/codes according to the activity (domain) or interlocutor are motivated by the wish to identify and affiliate linguistically with a social reference group. Such practices have been discussed under headings such as ‘crossing’ [when a speaker uses languages or varieties that do not form part of their expected repertoire] and ‘mocking’.²⁷ In Rampton’s (1995) study of multiethnic

²⁴ The UK government website does recognise that “There is considerable variation in the pronunciation of English (regional accents) and in the use of vocabulary and grammatical rules (dialects) across the country” (UK Government, no date). However, government communication, official documents, and formal examinations are all invariably in Standard English.

²⁵ For instance, in the USA, Zentella (2005:22) reports that regionally/ethnically linked dialects of Spanish (e.g., Southwest, Mexican, Nuyorican) and English (e.g., Chicano English, Puerto Rican English) suffer the greatest stigma but adds that at the same time, “the linguistic variables and discourse markers that distinguish the varieties of Latino Spanish and English, most of which remain undocumented, affirm ethnic solidarity among their speakers.”

²⁶ Thus, Gumperz (1972:229) cites the “anomalous situation in which two linguistically similar dialects spoken on different sides of a political boundary are regarded as belonging to different languages, not because of any inherent linguistic differences but because their speakers pay language loyalty to different standards.” Similarly, what differentiates a language from a creole is inextricable from historical power relations. Linguistically English is not commonly seen as a creole language, despite the fact that Early English is the result of the slow fusion of the foreign ruling class’s Norman French and the subject population’s Anglo-Saxon (Anderson 2006:41). On the other hand, languages, or language change, that develop from European colonisation of other parts of the world are typically seen as hybrid or creole, e.g. Jamaican creole or Haitian creole; thus, whether one counts two aspects of a system as discrete and not-entirely-compatible, and therefore syncretic, depends one’s subject position, rather than the nature of the forms or systems in and of themselves (Bailey 2007a:270; see also Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985 and Sebba 1997).

²⁷ On crossing, cf. Bucholtz (1999); Hewitt (1996); Rampton (2005); on mocking, cf. Mason Carris (2011); Hill (2003). What these studies tell us is that it is valuable to look at the ways in which

teenagers living in urban Britain, young people switched between vernacular English and Creole, Panjabi or stylised Indian English; at times, their speech could be said to contain distinct voices. Bakhtin's (1981) concept of heteroglossia is valuable for approaching such situations as it refers to the simultaneous use of different kinds of speech and conveys the potential polysemy of every utterance, whose meaning is intrinsically tied to contextual indicators. Heteroglossia is perhaps most evident when a speaker combines different languages in their speech. Extremely common amongst bilingual speakers (Wei 2000), this practice has been theorised as, *inter alia*, borrowing, code-switching, and code-mixing (e.g. Auer 1999; Blom & Gumperz [1972] 2000; Gumperz [1972] 2003; Wei 1994), translanguaging (Garcia 2007), and language alternation (Gafaranga 2007). From his research on Dominican-Americans, Bailey (2007b:259) concluded that by failing to treat two or more languages as a meaningful opposition in certain contexts, the speakers effectively erase the boundary that constitutes the two languages as distinct. Hence, the combination of languages can be seen as a code in itself, rather than the amalgamation of distinctive codes. Bailey's work is an example of the significant body of research that has focused on the mixing of Spanish and English among Latinos in the USA, where it has become colloquially known as Spanglish.²⁸ Gafaranga (2007:11) argues that the very act of naming such a practice "shows that language alternation, where it occurs as a significant means of communication, is a very visible phenomenon, [and that] because it is visible, people react to it, often negatively, depending on prevalent language ideologies." Indeed the dominant, institutionalised language ideology is that languages should not be mixed, as mixing results in what are considered to be fabricated and bastardised forms, rather than skilful or ludic creations.²⁹ Furthermore, mixing is widely perceived to be a sign of linguistic laziness, to betray inadequate mastery, and to be detrimental to the correct command of languages. The resonance of this language ideological discourse with Latin Americans in London will be examined in Chapter 5 (5.3.2). While acknowledging the theoretical distinctions that have been made between code-switching and code-mixing, the generic term 'mixing' will be favoured in this study, as the precise syntactic or morphological nature of these combinations will not be explored.

"people use language to index social group affiliations in situations where the acceptability and legitimacy of their doing so is open to question, incontrovertibly guaranteed neither by ties of inheritance, ingroup socialisation, nor by any other language ideology" (Rampton 1999:422).

²⁸ See, for example, Bailey (2007b); Gumperz & Hernández-Chavez ([1972] 2003); Lipski (2005); Pfaff (1979); Poplack (1980); Zentella (1997, 2005).

²⁹ For example, '*vacunar la carpeta*' is a hispanised form of 'to vacuum the carpet,' but literally means 'to vaccinate the folder.' Example taken from Stavans' "Spanglish dictionary" (2003), where he states that he recorded about 6000 oral and written instances of Spanglish over the years (p. 61).

In conclusion, speakers can be expected to speak much more than just ‘a language.’ Instead, it is preferable to examine their “verbal repertoire,” which Gumperz (1972:230) characterises as “the totality of dialectal and superposed variants regularly employed within a community” (see also Benor 2010), but which can also be taken to refer to the breadth of language practices of an individual. In this study the focus will be on how broad language choice is read ideologically, but not on deciphering the speech characteristics of participants (such as how prosody and lexis index regional or social affiliation). Although there are many indigenous languages in Latin America, these did not form part of participants’ repertoire and hence will not be treated here.

“Migrants need to speak the language properly”

To speak of *the* language, without further specification, as linguists do, is tacitly to accept the *official* definition of the *official* language of a political unit. This language is the one which, within the territorial limits of that unit, imposes itself in the whole population as the only legitimate language.

Bourdieu (1991:45)

‘Speaking the language properly’ is another commonsensical statement which conceals socio-historical processes of standardisation and institutionalisation, buttressed by the legitimising and rationalising discourses of experts (Blommaert 1999; Bourdieu 2001). (In)famous for dictating which language forms are valid and which are unacceptable, institutions such as the *Académie Française* have been key to the unifying, normalising, monolingualising endeavour of the nation-state; indeed the current director of the *Real Academia Española* affirmed that “the founding academics [of the *Real Academia Española*] used to say that they worked to serve the honour of the nation” [my translation] (Rodríguez Marcos 2010). For Bourdieu (1991:45), the official language is bound up with the state, both in its genesis and its social uses; it is in the process of state formation that the conditions are created for the constitution of a unified linguistic market, dominated by the official language. Obligatory on official occasions (cf. the launch at City Hall in Chapter 1) and in official places (schools, public administrations, political institutions, etc.), this state language becomes the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured (Bourdieu 1991:45). Prescriptive norms of ‘correctness’ are particularly enforced in schools, where, argues Hymes (1996:84), “[a] latent function of the educational system is to instil linguistic insecurity, to discriminate linguistically, to channel children in ways that have an integral linguistic component, while appearing open and fair to all.” Thus, the idea of ‘speaking properly’ (in terms of, e.g., lexis, syntax, pronunciation, as well as volume) is fundamentally divisive and inequitable, insofar as it implicitly privileges certain forms of

speech, while denigrating others, and inasmuch as access to the relevant resources (e.g. type of schooling and home education) is unevenly distributed in stratified societies. For Bourdieu (1991:145), notions of propriety and therefore impropriety are integral to what he calls the “linguistic market”: “a system of relations of force which impose themselves as a system of specific sanctions and specific censorship, and thereby help fashion linguistic production by determining the “price” of linguistic products.” In turn, the unequal distribution of linguistic capital – i.e. competence in the legitimate language – is used to wield symbolic power and inflict symbolic violence (Bourdieu 1991). Through his concepts of “symbolic power / violence / capital,” Bourdieu aims to capture processes of domination which are misrecognised, in other words, that are so intrinsic to the hegemonic social order that they appear legitimate and go un-noticed. As a result, certain language forms are favoured at the expense of others, thus producing linguistic hierarchies which reproduce processes of domination and subordination.

In sum, to borrow from Orwell ([1945] 1993), some speakers are more equal than others, that is to say, their language practices are legitimised and valued by the hegemonic linguistic order, and they can accrue symbolic power as a result. In practice this means that migrants arriving to London and students going to school all bring different linguistic baggage and uneven ‘linguistic capital.’ Bourdieu’s concept of ‘linguistic capital’ is particularly apt here because it captures the idea of linguistic advantage as a *commodity*, that can therefore be priced, desired, purchased, and which has to be unfairly distributed for it to have exchange value.

“[Speaking English] in order to integrate and find work”

The discourse according to which being proficient in English is necessary to be recognised in the job market and to integrate successfully is one that circulates widely in the UK (cf. recent government announcements: “Jobseekers must improve English or lose benefits – PM”, BBC 13/09/11; “Foreign GPs will face English language test – Lansley”, BBC 04/10/11). Indeed, the value of being able to understand and communicate in English for social and economic integration is undeniable: McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker (2011:7) found that “although Latin Americans in London are well educated, one-third cannot speak English, which affects their wider integration into London’s society and economy.” The main difficulty with this segment of the language ideological discourse is that it places the onus on the migrant to achieve linguistic proficiency when, in fact, the conditions making this possible are shaped by socio-political processes, such as governmental decisions regarding the availability of ESOL classes. Furthermore, as Blackledge remarks,

[To] suggest that simply gaining some degree of proficiency in English will lead to acceptance and employment by the host community is naive and simplistic. Racism and discrimination are often based on appearance, dress, cultural practice, accent, to name only some of the factors at work. (Blackledge 2005:53)

In addition, for those who are intent on learning English, lack of opportunity to practise it can be a real obstacle. Understandably, most sectors that welcome migrants with a limited command of English present few, if any, occasions where it will be necessary to communicate with customers in English. In some contexts (such as cleaning for Latin Americans in London), there may not even be the need to speak English to co-workers when these share the same minority language. For those who wish to engage with formal learning, it can be demanding and costly to combine one or more jobs with English lessons. Finding the necessary time to invest in learning English is often problematic (Block 2008; McIlwaine 2007). In her investigation into the coping practices of Latin American migrants in London, McIlwaine found that

The vast majority of migrants had attended classes at some point since arriving in the UK. However many had abandoned them for a range of reasons including the poor quality of classes available, the high cost of classes, the need to work long hours, and the difficulties of juggling work, family, and studying. (McIlwaine 2007:48)

Learning English should therefore not be viewed as a leisure activity that depends on migrants' goodwill, but should be contextualised within specific socio-economic constraints. Thus, McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker (2011) found that (a) "more than half of Latin Americans [in London] identified language difficulties and specifically, the inability to speak English as their main problem (58%)" (p.125), (b) many felt that their marginalisation from wider British society was exacerbated by widespread problems in speaking English and the lack of appropriate ESOL provision (p.9), (c) irregular migrants expressed their frustration at not being able to access some English courses because proof of right to reside in the UK was a requirement (ibid.), and (d) "the main need to emerge was providing improved language skills in English" (p.126). Similarly, James (2005:7) found that, for the Ecuadorian community in London, language was a prominent issue that should be addressed by the public sector, as many from the first generation, particularly the women, did not speak English; in turn, this placed limits on community participation. Language proficiency also has critical repercussions for migration status, since it forms part of the granting of citizenship.³⁰ However, as Blackledge (2005:52) observes, "[w]here language testing for

³⁰ In the UK, the government requires that applicants for naturalisation as a British citizen or indefinite leave to remain (settlement) should take the 'Life in the UK test' if their level of English is ESOL Entry 3 or above. If their level of English is lower than ESOL Entry 3, then they need to attend

citizenship is introduced, a new gate-keeping mechanism comes into play, potentially preventing a group of willing residents from participating in the democratic process, and from accessing their rights.”

As a result of the importance of, and yet also the difficulties tied to, learning English, McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker have made the following recommendation:

English language is pivotal to the integration of all migrant communities, including Latin Americans. Opportunities to learn the language need to be more widely available regardless of length of residence and immigration status. Classes need to be affordable, provided at times which are accessible to those working anti-social hours, and delivered via a range of providers including by employers. (McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:133)

Consequently, this study aligns with Heller’s (2007:2) view of language as “a set of resources which circulate in unequal ways in social networks and discursive spaces, and whose meaning and value are socially constructed within the constraints of social organizational processes, under specific historical conditions.”

2.4.3 Language ideological discourse – Part II

“It is important that the children of migrants know how to speak their mother tongue”

Despite the widespread dissatisfaction with the terms ‘mother tongue’ and ‘native speaker’, which constitute a particularly crude form of ethnic absolutism, they have widespread currency, almost *faute de mieux* (Rampton 2005:320). Underlying these concepts are various assumptions:

- (a) The parents’ language constitutes the child’s ‘mother tongue’, which is commonly present “as the language of the self, of the heart, of one’s ethnic, national, and cultural identity” (Pavlenko 2005:200).
- (b) Speakers have one mother tongue, thus implying a monolingual view of language acquisition.
- (c) This mother tongue is unitary and stable across generations.

However, Le Page & Tabouret-Keller argue that:

The concept of ‘native language’ or ‘mother tongue’ is, like all concepts, culturally conditioned. In multilingual settings the term ‘native language’ or ‘mother tongue’ may have little meaning because children are exposed to many linguistic systems from birth. In immigrant communities in Britain, where efforts have been made to provide

combined English language (ESOL) and citizenship classes instead. Most local further education or community colleges run these courses (Home Office, no date).

instruction for children in their ‘mother tongue’, it usually turns out that their home dialect is any case different from that in which tuition might be provided and the children’s version of the home dialect is different again from that of their parents. (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985:189)

Thus, the notions of ‘mother tongue’ and ‘home language’ for migrant families are misguided because (a) they suggest that the intimate, informal language is the minority language, (b) they do not account for variation (i.e., according to situation, family member, age; over time), and (c) they ignore the extent to which families may shift towards the majority language. In many cases they completely misrepresent the linguistic heterogeneity that exists in the home. Such misconceptions have had important consequences in schools where, given the popular understanding of bilingualism as identical proficiency in two languages, it has sometimes been assumed that children of migrants are fluent in English and their ‘home language.’ In their critique of TESOL practice in the schooling sector in England, Leung, Harris & Rampton contend that:

there are serious problems with current routine practices in the education of bilingual learners. Such pupils are frequently attributed a kind of romantic bilingualism and turned into reified speakers of community languages, and in the process their ethnicities are also reified.

[I]n the realities of urban multilingualism, a noticeable number of adolescents from both majority and minority ethnic groups do not show a strong allegiance to their supposed linguistic inheritance. (Leung, Harris & Rampton 1997:553, 557)

Given that the language learnt in early childhood may not be the one spoken fluently in adolescence and that one does not necessarily identify with the parents’ language(s), Rampton has suggested replacing the terms native speaker and mother tongue with the notions of language *expertise*, language *inheritance*, and language *affiliation*. Although this model will not subsequently be used in this study, it is useful at this stage to give a sense of how complex the ethnolinguistic situation may be for Latin Americans in London, notably in terms of the expectations regarding their command and their usage of Spanish, as well as their attitude towards it.

“Because it forms an essential part of their heritage”

As Fishman (1989:28) observed, “language is much more than ‘merely communication.’” Fishman wrote extensively on the importance and symbolism of passing on a minority language to the next generation, remarking that:

Anything can become symbolic of ethnicity (whether food, dress, shelter, land tenure, artefacts, work, patterns of worship), but since language is the prime symbol system to begin with and since it is commonly relied upon so heavily (even if not exclusively) to

enact, celebrate and ‘call forth’ all ethnic activity, the likelihood that it will be recognised and singled out as symbolic of ethnicity is great indeed. (Fishman 1989:32)

In the context of migration, language is often elevated as the transmitter of ethnocultural identity and as the way to retain a crucial connection with the country of origin, in particular with grandparents and other relatives. From this perspective, it becomes vitally important to *maintain* the community language, and through it, the family and community heritage. The question then follows as to *who* should be responsible for this language maintenance. State education is conditioned by the first part of the language ideological discourse (“In England, people speak English”), so compulsory schooling includes some modern foreign language teaching (most commonly French, Spanish, and German) but no bilingual education. In fact, the situation in England has not changed much since the Swann Report judged that:

The linguistic, religious and cultural identities of ethnic minority communities should be fostered but we cannot support the arguments put forward for the introduction of programmes of bilingual education in maintained schools. Mainstream schools should not seek to assume the role of community providers for maintaining ethnic minority community languages. (DES 1985:771)

Some state schools do now offer some minority languages (e.g. Bengali), but overall provision across England is patchy. The principal providers of minority language tuition are *complementary schools*, which also provide spaces where young people can learn about and practise minority heritage. These schools therefore represent an ideal site for researching discourses that construct a mutually constitutive relationship between ethnicity and language among migrant communities; for this reason, most of the data collection in this study took place at a Latin American complementary school, ELA, described in the following chapter (Section 3.4.1). Greater information will be provided about complementary schools in the UK in Chapter 4 (Section 4.2), and about where ELA fits in within this ethnolinguistic landscape in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4). Now, however, I would like to focus on specific findings from the complementary school literature in order to tease out two points that will be relevant to the subsequent analysis.

The first point relates to one of the most recurrent analytical concepts in the complementary school literature: that of *capital*. For Bourdieu (1986:47), economic capital is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalised in the form of property rights, while social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or a group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition (1990:119). The concept of cultural capital was originally conceived as a result of his attempt to understand

inequalities in educational achievement (Bourdieu 1986);³¹ looking beyond natural aptitude and economic investment, he argued for analytical consideration to be given to “the best hidden and socially most determinant educational investment, namely, the domestic transmission of cultural capital” (ibid., p.48). Cultural capital can exist in three forms: embodied, i.e. in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and the body; objectified, in the form of cultural goods such as books, dictionaries, machines, etc.; and institutionalised, in the form of, e.g., academic qualifications (Bourdieu 1986:47). Symbolic capital, commonly called prestige, reputation, renown, etc., is the form in which the different forms of capital are perceived and recognised as legitimate (Bourdieu 1985:725). Importantly, as Pennycook (2001:125) observes, “none of these forms of capital matter unless they are accorded symbolic capital, that is to say, unless what they represent is acknowledged as having legitimacy, they will not be usable as capital.”

The concept of capital captures ideas of acquisition, ownership, advantage and, by implication, disadvantage and injustice. In the UK, Bourdieu’s extended economic metaphor (based on notions such as capital, market, and profits) resonates very strongly with the stratified and competitive education sector, shaped by market forces and plagued with structural inequalities ranging from the access to the outcome of schooling. Indeed, Archer & Francis (2006:31) observe that “[t]he sociology of education has witnessed a burgeoning use of Bourdieuan concepts to analyse the re/production of classed inequalities – and privilege – in relation to compulsory and post-compulsory education.” From Bourdieu’s (1986:46) perspective, capital is what makes the games of society something other than simple games of chance; the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital represents the immanent structure of the social world, i.e., the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which govern its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices. What is of particular relevance to this study is the linkage made between cultural capital and language orientation.

Finally, the second point concerns the gradation of ethnicity according to language proficiency. Whereas in ethnic monitoring forms and in essentialising discourses, an individual simply belongs to an ethnic group, and hence just *is* British or Afro-Caribbean, a more subtle perspective on ethnicity is apparent in the use of terms such as ‘banana’ and ‘coconut.’ For instance, in their study of Chinese complementary schools in the UK, Francis, Archer & Mau (2008:9) found that some young people felt that “the British-born Chinese

³¹ “The notion of cultural capital initially presented itself to me, in the course of research, as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from different social classes by relating academic success, i.e., the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market, to the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class fractions” (Bourdieu 1986:47).

who don't speak Chinese are like bananas because they're Chinese on the outside and inside they are completely English."³² Here, language proficiency serves to draw a distinction between external (apparent) and internal (genuine) ethnicity. While terms such as 'banana' refer to people who are in some ways 'not true' to their ethnicity, other terms seem to imply that some are 'too true' to their ethnicity, and thus appear unsophisticated. For example, in their study of two Gujarati complementary schools in the UK, Creese et al. (2006:38) found that the term "freshie" was used to refer to the non-native, who is an outsider by dint of their "singular ethnicity and culture indexed by a single language," thus "a lack of bilingualism links the freshie to static ethnic identity categories."³³ These examples are important for this study insofar as they illustrate how social actors can attribute *degrees of ethnicity* according to perceived language proficiency and language orientation, and produce racialised linguistic hierarchies based on discourses about assimilation and moral stances towards mono/bilingualism.

Drawing from this overview, Chapters 5 and 6 will focus on (a) how social actors interpret everyday practices (both linguistic and embodied) as indexing ethnic belonging, and (b) how processes of evaluation and hierarchisation result from the legitimisation or delegitimisation of these practices as symbolic capital. In light of the literature and related issues reviewed in this section, the research question that will guide Chapter 5 is:

How do language ideologies inform the ways in which Latino families are represented at Latin American school ELA?

2.5 Ethnicity, migration, and gender

As has been demonstrated so far, one way of approaching the condition and experiences of migrants is by investigating how they are positioned by the government's classification of ethnic groups (cf. Section 2.3.2). Another way is to consider how language ideologies create constraints and expectations regarding their language practices (cf. Section 2.4). In this section a third angle is examined: the gendered nature of transnational migration. The aim of this section is to provide a selective overview of the literature on transnational migration and gender, and to outline the approach taken to analyse feminine representations in this study.

³² Likewise, in the USA, Lo (2009) found that students displaced stigma through words like 'Twinkie' and 'banana', terms to refer to someone who is "yellow on the outside and white on the inside" (p.8), while the term 'whitewashed' was used pejoratively to describe Koreans who orient towards a White lifestyle (p.5).

³³ Similarly, in the USA, the derogatory term 'fob' ('fresh off the boat') is used to designate someone who looks, acts, and speaks as if they had recently migrated (cf. Jeon 2007; Lo 2009; Shankar 2008; Talmy 2009); in her study of Korean-Americans, Lo (2009:3) found that language was always cited as the primary index of fobbiness.

Despite the recognition of the feminization of migration, mainstream literature on migration has traditionally appeared to be gender-neutral while utilising models of migration based on the experiences of men (Kofman et al. 2000:7). Furthermore, most of the major theories of migrant incorporation devote almost no attention to gender; Portes & Rumbaut (2001:68) do include gender as a component of their segmented assimilation model, but it is discussed only briefly, without exploring how gendered home or school processes produce significant gender gaps (Donato et al. 2006:12-13). In the last three decades, there have been growing efforts to investigate how gender shapes, and is influenced by, migratory flows, trajectories, and experiences (Donato et al. 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003; Pessar & Mahler 2003). More and more researchers across disciplines are recognising the “need to make a gendered analysis central to theories of transnationalism and the study of (im)migration” (Boehm 2008:17). Among these, the sociologist Hondagneu-Sotelo has played an important role in opening up the study of migration to gender theory, arguing that “Gender is not simply a variable to be measured, but a set of social relations that organize immigration patterns” (1994:3). Gender refers to the social and cultural ideals and practices related to masculinity and femininity. It involves the ways in which cultures imbue the biological difference between males and females with meaning such as demarcating between male and female domains in activities, tasks, spaces, time, dress and so on (Pessar & Mahler 2003:813). Gender subjectivities are socially and culturally constructed through a complex negotiation of power (Boehm 2008:17). Therefore it is necessary to see gender identities, relations, and ideologies as fluid and contextual. Indeed, there has been a shift away from the premise of a unitary notion of “women” and men” to an increasingly accepted perspective that acknowledges how the multiplicities of masculinities and femininities are interconnected, relational, and, most important, enmeshed in relations of class, race and nation (Hondagneu-Sotelo 2003:4).

This burgeoning literature has furthered our understanding of how transnational migration involves and affects gender roles and identities in multiple social and geographic locations. In order to factor in these various dimensions, Pessar & Mahler (2001) developed the theoretical framework of “gendered geographies of power,” which is composed of three elements: “geographic scales,” “social locations” and “power geometries.” Geographic scales point to the idea that gender operates simultaneously on multiple spatial and social scales (e.g. the body, the family, the state) across transnational terrains. Social locations refer to persons’ positions within interconnected power hierarchies created through historical, political, economic, geographic, kinship-based and other socially stratifying factors. Borrowed from Doreen Massey (1994), the concept of power geometries addresses the types and degrees of agency people exert given their social locations (Pessar & Mahler

2003:816). Despite the fact that this framework has not been universally taken up, many studies similarly conceptualise transnational migration as “a gendered process imbued with hierarchies of power from the global to local scales embedded in the practices and ideologies of states, institutions, labour markets, households and individuals” (McIlwaine 2010:282).

Empirically, these studies have tended to focus on the material, emotional, and structural aspects of transnational migration for adults. At the level of the family/home, research on the division of labour and changing relationships between partners / spouses from Latin America has emphasised the role of patriarchy, but also of agency, and has outlined some of the benefits, as well as limitations, of migration for both sexes (cf. Boehm 2008; Hondagneu-Sotelo 1994; Malkin 2004, 2007; McIlwaine 2010). Indeed, migration automatically translates not into lifestyle improvement, but into a collection of new socioeconomic and socio-political scenarios that surround family, couple relationships, and the rest of the immigrant world (González-López 2007:242). At a national or international level, studies point to the undeniable role of the state in organising gendered patterns of migration, in other words, enabling or impeding access to citizenship and employment differentially to female and male workers. In Europe, Kofman et al. (2000) have shown how the experiences and choices of migrant women are affected by globalisation and increasingly restrictionist policies on immigration, citizenship, and welfare provision, as well as by the persistence of racism (on family migration in Europe, see also Kraler et al. 2011; in Mexico / USA, see Segura & Zavella 2007:Part 4). Beyond Europe, Silvey’s (2004) study of the Indonesian and Saudi states’ involvement in shaping the migration and working conditions of Indonesian domestic servants employed in Saudi Arabia analyses the gender politics of state power as refracted in struggles over women’s transnational migration and domestic labour.

Indeed, paid domestic work remains one of the most gendered and racialised occupations (cf. Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila 1997). Viewed from a global scale, migrant women can be viewed as part of exploitative global care chains denoting how middle-class women’s entry into the labour market in the industrialised North creates a demand for ‘emotional’ or caring labour that is increasingly met by women from the Global South (McIlwaine 2010:284). Stereotypes about the supposed qualities of minority groups for such work contribute, not only to a situation where female migrants are concentrated in highly feminised and low-status jobs, but also to abusive practices. For example, in Spain, where Latina employees are reputed for their alleged “gentle temperament,” Pérez Grande (2008:147) remarks that “this stereotype of complacent and self-sacrificing women can result in higher expectations of submission and a higher risk of dominating practices on the part of employers” [my translation].

The question of how migrants are imagined and represented in the receiving country is therefore an important one, since: “representations provide the arena in which cultural understandings and hierarchies are produced, contested, and revealed” (Ginsburg & Rapp 1995:6). For instance, several studies (e.g. Chavez 2007) have documented how, in the US, Latinas, especially Mexican women, have been associated with fertility and reproduction in public discourse, and, by extension, represented as a threat and an economic burden. The alarmist representation of the Mexican female migrant as a ‘breeder’ exemplifies how ethnicised femininity can become pathologised. Indeed Chavez (2007:88) observes that the discourse surrounding Latina reproduction is about more than reproduction: it is also about reinforcing a characterization of Anglos as the legitimate Americans who are being supplanted demographically by less legitimate Latinas.

This example points to two aspects of gendered migration that have received less attention from migration scholars. One is the question of moralising discourses and the concomitant interconnection between morality and mobility. From her study of gender relations in a Mexican migrant community in the USA, Malkin (2007:433) concluded that women negotiate and construct their gender identity within migrant networks, which often remain bound to ideologies that continue to construct women within their familial roles, and that migration has not as yet changed many of their ideas about what a moral person is. In Indonesia, Silvey (2000)’s study of the relationships between morality, migration, and gender among a migrant population found that migrants shaped their identity in relation to negotiated meanings of gendered concepts in both their communities of origin and their urban surroundings (p.511). In sum these studies suggest the need to consider the relational and diasporic nature of migrant subjectivities, and how these are embedded in moralising discourses.

Secondly, the extent to which popular representations of migrants are ethnicised, embodied, and pervasive is still an under-researched area. With regards to Latino/a migrants – the group with which this study is concerned – negative stereotypes feed into a situation where they can become portrayed as a socially inferior and marginalised minority. For instance, in Spain, the former colonial power, Wright (2010:378-379) found that “Latin Americans in Madrid are often associated with a transnational gang known as the ‘Latin Kings,’” and that her Peruvian respondents “complained of repeatedly facing discrimination and [being] treated as second-class citizens, often experiencing verbal and physical aggression.” Such inferiorisation and discrimination need to be viewed historically – i.e. from a postcolonial perspective – and socially – i.e. within a context where recent Latino migrants are associated with criminal activity, menial or undervalued occupations (e.g. cleaners and carers, cf. Pérez Grande 2008), and academic underachievement (cf. Martín-

Rojo 2010 and Corona 2012). Similarly, in the USA, Louie (2006:388) reports that the Dominican-American young people she studied have to contend with “the gender-neutral image of Latinos as academic underachievers associated with crime, poverty, and drugs.”

In the case of Latina migrants, studies coincide in reporting the exoticised and sexualised ways in which they are perceived. In Germany, Gruner-Domic (2011:482) reports that, once she migrated from New York to Berlin, one of her adult participants experienced change, as “her Latina or Dominican body was not reduced to the stereotyped enclave of Dominicans in New York.” In the USA, Louie (2006:388) found that her second generation Dominican-American participants negotiate mainstream expectations of their group, which involve “images of the Latin male as the incarnation of machoism and the Latin female as hyper-sexualised.” In Sweden, teenage girls of Latin American descent reported having to deal with Latina ethnicity as a marker of promiscuous sexuality; for them, being seen as “sex objects” was associated with the widespread commodity culture of Latin music, (Lundström 2006). In these three studies, women of Latina descent report being sexualised by the majority group and the media, which illustrates how the representation of *latinidad* in the North has been a gendered and sexualised one.

These last two studies are additionally interesting because they deal with young people, whose experiences have been far less studied by migration scholars than those of adults. This being said, the expanding second-generation research (e.g. Espiritu 2001; Levitt 2009) is making important contributions to our understanding and theorising of assimilation processes and how they interact with gender and other stratifying forces (Mahler & Pessar 2006:35). By contrast, the young people who were not born in the receiving country but who migrated there as children or teenagers, i.e. the 1.5 generation, constitute a demographic generally overlooked by scholars.

Young people from the 1.5 generation differ from the second generation in that they are now growing up in a different country from the one they were born and initially brought up in, which may complicate their ethnocultural affiliation and may also entail that they are in a position to make comparisons between the two (or more, in the case of multiple migration). Growing up in different countries may involve being exposed to different gender norms and as a result having to assess their worth and relevance to the current situation. This may be intensified by return trips to the country of origin. Indeed migrants often become particularly aware of the relational and contextual nature of gender as they attempt to fulfil expectations of identity and behaviour that may differ sharply in the several places they live (Donato et al. 2006:6). The potential “dual frame of reference” (Guarnizo 1997) or “bifocality” (Rouse 1992) developed by young migrants merits scholarly attention, as the manner in which they make sense of their position and its affordances will be decisive for their integration and

success, notably at school. Indeed, Pessar & Mahler (2003:831) advocate the need to extend the analysis to children and not just to gender among adults, as well beyond the more thoroughly researched arenas – such as Latin America, North America and the Caribbean – to the rest of the world. Consequently, attending to the gendered experiences and perspectives of Latino/as from the 1.5 generation in a European context like London can augment the literature on the Latino diaspora, as well as the literature on gender and migration.

The three studies on Latina migrants mentioned above reflect a wider academic trend to focus on migrants' accounts of how they are perceived and treated by the majority population, rather than how they perceive and represent their ethnic peers. Analysing 'inside' representations of the minority group can provide valuable insights into how members deal with some of the contradictory and conflictual gender ideologies and identities that form part of the transnational space they occupy. Indeed, multiple gender ideologies often coexist and permit flexibility and negotiation to occur in practice, as can be observed in most communities (Malkin 2007:434). Moreover, how migrants represent the members of their ethnic community in their discourse draws from and feeds into the intersubjective construction of a social imaginary. This, according to Pessar & Mahler (2003), is a fruitful direction for research on gender and migration. Since its initial articulation, Pessar & Mahler have expanded their framework of gendered geographies of power by adding two dimensions to it. Firstly, they argue that agency is affected not only by extra-personal factors but also by quintessentially individual characteristics such as initiative, and secondly, that social agency must include the role of cognitive processes such as the imagination, as well as substantive agency (*ibid.*, p.817). More specifically they ask how the ways in which men and women imagine the gendered lives of their peers located within transnational migrants' social fields influence their agency (p.828), thus probing at a "gendered social imaginary" (p.830). The scant body of literature on this topic is particularly concerned with matters of fidelity, sexuality, and alternative masculinities and femininities (p.828). For instance, Espiritu's (2001) study of the relationship between Filipino immigrant parents and their daughters in the USA, found that the ideal 'Filipina' is partially constructed on the community's conceptualization of white women; in other words, the Filipina is everything that they are not: she is sexually modest and dedicated to her family, while they are sexually promiscuous and uncaring (p.427). Contextualising these discourses within the dominant culture's pervasive hypersexualization of Filipinas, Espiritu argues that the construction of the 'ideal' Filipina – as family-oriented and chaste – can be read as an effort to reclaim the morality of the community.

Furthermore, in order to broaden the field, Pessar & Mahler (2003) suggest that “research on transnational migrants might articulate with studies which explore how images, meanings and values associated with gender, consumption, modernity, rights and “the family” circulate within the global cultural economy” (p.836). Heeding this recommendation, this thesis investigates the role of cultural images, meanings, and values associated with femininity, in the discourses of Latinas. In order to develop a nuanced understanding of their discourses, it draws from “studies which explore how images... circulate within the economy” (ibid.). To achieve this, I argue that it is necessary to place the analytic lens on what Crenshaw (1993:1283) calls “representational intersectionality,” i.e., how discursive positions are informed by cultural imagery and gendered stereotypes. Professor of Law Kimberlé Crenshaw first introduced the concept of intersectionality to denote the various ways in which race and gender interact to shape the multiple dimensions of Black women’s employment experiences (cf. Crenshaw 1989). In a subsequent article (Crenshaw 1993), she explored the various ways in which race and gender intersect in shaping structural, political, and representational aspects of violence against women of colour (see also Yuval-Davis 2006). What is of particular relevance to this study is her notion of representational intersectionality, in other words, the analytical focus on how “[cultural] images are produced through a confluence of prevalent narratives of race and gender” (Crenshaw 1993:1283), in order to deconstruct, and thereby expose, the pernicious effects of cultural imagery (see also Collins 1990).

Thus theories from cultural studies can enable us to contextualise the findings from the three studies on Latinas outlined above. For instance, the eroticisation of the Latina body can be said to form part of ‘tropicalism’, which

erases specificity and homogenises all that is identified as Latin and Latina/o. Under the trope of tropicalism, attributes such as bright colours, rhythmic music, and brown or olive skin comprise some of the most enduring stereotypes about Latinas/os, a stereotype best embodied by the excesses of Carmen Miranda and the hypersexualisation of Ricky Martin. Gendered aspects of the trope of tropicalism include [...] the spitfire female Latina [...]. (Molina Guzmán & Valdivia 2004:211)

This stereotyping also needs to be located within a postcolonial context, where the female subaltern is represented with exaggerated exoticism.

In line with Anthias’ (2005:33) critical assessment of intersectionality, this study aims to distinguish between the notions of social position (concrete position vis-à-vis a range of social resources such as economic, cultural and political) and social positioning (how we articulate, understand and interact with these positions, e.g. contesting, challenging, defining). I consider these concepts to be more useful than the upper / middle / working class

typology, which, as Espiritu (2001:418) found in her study of the Filipino American community in San Diego, does not capture the complexity of immigrant lives. Furthermore, the intersectionality literature is commonly criticised for constructing people as belonging to fixed and permanent groups (e.g. ethnic, gender and class groups) which then all enter, in a pluralist fashion, into their determination; this undermines the focus on social processes, practices and outcomes as they impact on social categories, social structures and individuals (Anthias 2005:34). Bearing this in mind, the analysis will focus on the social processes through which, and the social practices based on which, ethnicity is combined with social position (Chapters 4 and 5), and with gender and social position (Chapter 6).

In sum, one of this thesis' aims is to investigate the construction of a gendered social imaginary among Latinas from the 1.5 generation in London. In light of the literature and related issues reviewed in this section, Chapter 6 will explore the role of moralising discourses, cultural stereotypes, and global imagery in in-group representations of Latinas, and relate these to the social positioning of participants. The research question that will guide this chapter is:

How do gendered, ethnicising, and stratifying discourses inform the ways in which Latinas are represented among young Latinas from the 1.5 generation?

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued that concepts can become reified and ideologically constructed as the base unit of social organisation and analysis: from the nation-state understood as the unquestionable framework for apprehending migration and social sciences, to ethnic categories seen as groups and groups as speech communities. In their assumptions about speech communities and native speakers, in their choice of focus, scholars can reinforce linkages between group, culture, and language. There is a risk, however, that the academic acknowledgement of the socially constructed nature of ethnicity is merely tokenistic; indeed, I could be accused of doing exactly what Glick Schiller & Çağlar (2009:184-185) denounce: "Even those scholars who begin their study by critiquing the ethnic group as a unit of analysis or by demonstrating the constructed nature of ethnic boundaries, present their data as the study of a population identified ethnically." Therein lies the conundrum of the social constructionist researcher: how to avoid perpetuating essentialist categorisations, whilst referring to the existing literature and using terms that are not too unwieldy (e.g., 'Latin American' instead of 'person born in Latin America but now established in the UK'). At any rate, the approach taken here is a processual and critical one:

this study aims to research groupness “as an event,” “something that may or may not happen” (Brubaker 2004:12); it seeks to investigate how social actors construct and enact ethnic groupness, and how they characterise, and respond to characterisations of, *latinidad*.

The aim of this chapter has been to contextualise, complicate, and critique the terms ‘Latin American’ (and hence ethnicity), ‘language,’ and ‘gender’ in the context of migration. The first step was to understand some of the key characteristics of Latin American migration and of London as a global city. The second step consisted in going beyond essentialising, fixed, and homogeneous conceptions of ethnicity and language, so as to grasp how ethnic groupings and language practices are the result of classification and hierarchisation rooted in socio-historical processes. These processes of categorisation serve to create and perpetuate a social order, where certain groups and language forms are awarded more status and recognition than others. The labels generated as a result (e.g., ‘Latino’, ‘English’) are used by state institutions, organisations, and individuals to attribute and self-ascribe characteristics built on the *relationality of difference*. Or, as Comaroff & Comaroff (1992:51) put it, “[i]n as much as collective social identity always entails some form of communal self-definition, it is invariably founded on a marked opposition between ‘ourselves’ and ‘other/s’; identity, that is, a *relation* inscribed in culture.” Analytically the task is not to acknowledge undeniable phenotypic and linguistic variation, but to investigate *how* variations are discursively constructed and evaluated. The theoretical premise of this thesis is therefore that social actors use ethnic, linguistic, and gendered labels as means of affiliation and disaffiliation and that these labels are themselves the product of ideological processes which posit certain groups or forms as relatively pure, authentic, and desirable (notably in terms of the capital that they bring). In sum this thesis focuses on the processual nature of identification, rather than on the set nature of identity, by looking at the ethnicised, linguistic, and gendered discourses through which ‘acts of identity’ are performed, and which may be characterised by hybridity and heteroglossia. In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, the concepts of ethnopolitics, language ideologies, representational intersectionality, and cultural capital will constitute the theoretical backdrop for the analysis of discursive representations of Latin Americans in London.

Before delving into the analysis of the data, Chapter 3 provides a reflexive and narrative overview of the chosen methodology. There I argue that it was necessary to select an ethnographic approach in order to develop a complex, fine-grained understanding of the experiences of Latin Americans in London, and recount some of the obstacles, pitfalls, and highlights of fieldwork.

Chapter 3 – Being “like a pilgrim and a cartographer”: A reflexive account of ethnographic data collection

3.1 Introduction

“The course of ethnography cannot be predetermined.”

Hammersley & Atkinson (1983:28)

This chapter marks a shift from a predominantly theoretical discussion (in Chapter 2) to a more reflexive and narrative account of methodology. The epistemological rationale behind this is that, in order to fulfil the general aims outlined in Chapter 1 (Section 1.3.2), it was necessary to adopt an ethnographic approach. In turn this makes it indispensable to document the unpredictable and interpersonal process of collecting data. Ethnography has traditionally been the methodology of choice of anthropologists, amongst whom Clifford Geertz (1988:10) observed that “[t]he difficulty is that the oddity of constructing texts ostensibly scientific out of experiences broadly biographical, which is after all what ethnographers do, is thoroughly obscured.” Consequently, this chapter intends to palliate this by documenting the process by which “biographical experiences” formed the trigger for the data collected and analysed in subsequent chapters. The title of this chapter contains a quotation from Geertz’s work on the process of writing ethnography (1988:10); it encapsulates well the dual role of the ethnographer. On the one hand, s/he is a “pilgrim” in the sense of being someone who travels to a (traditionally unfamiliar) place, whilst also being a “cartographer,” in other words, someone who aims to chart, and thus to make sense of, this territory. This description resonates with Michael Agar’s (1996) notion of the “professional stranger,” the outsider who needs to be methodical in his/her encounters with people and their meaning-making practices, and with James Clifford’s (1992) idea of the “traveller.”

The main aims of this chapter are as follows: (a) to provide an epistemological warrant for the approach used and the data collected in this thesis, (b) to illustrate the uncertain and contingent nature of ethnographic data collection, and (c) to account for methodological choices contextually. To keep in line with the motif of the pilgrim/traveller, this chapter is constructed as a ‘journey,’ from a state characterised by a lack of contacts, of ignorance, and of diffuse focus, to a position of connectedness, enhanced knowledge, and precise focus. Ethnography has been described as “perhaps the most chaotic style of research” (Brewer 2000:103), a “messy set of tasks that will continue over a considerable period of time among

strangers that the ethnographer may inevitably “betray” (Heath et al. 2008:29), and this chapter seeks to illustrate these tensions empirically.

Perhaps ironically, it was by the end of fieldwork that I felt equipped to start an ethnographic project, so this is a reflexive account of learning to use ethnographic methods and having to adapt the project design, as well as an illustration of key fieldsites and participants. The chapter starts by discussing ethnographic methods (Section 3.2.1), ethics (Section 3.2.2), and the original research design (Section 3.2.3). It carries on by detailing the first, tentative phase of fieldwork (Section 3.3), before describing the main fieldsite, Latin American complementary school ELA (Section 3.4.1), and the field relations with students (Section 3.4.2) and teachers (Section 3.4.3). It then profiles the three ELA families who acted as key informants (Section 3.5). Next, it details two subsidiary fieldwork experiences, firstly a digital one, related to social networking sites (Section 3.6), and secondly a trip to Colombia (Section 3.7). From there it reflects on the interrelationship between positionality and the data collected (Section 3.8). Finally, it provides a summary of data collection and of data processing (Section 3.9).

3.2 Starting-point

3.2.1 Ethnographic methods

Surveys are good at providing a broad picture of predetermined activities and a sense of scope within a community, such as the size and segmentation of a population. The aim of this study, however, was to adopt an *interpretive* approach, in other words, to seek to discover and communicate the meaning-making perspectives of the people studied, and relate these to the ecological circumstances of action in which they find themselves (Erickson 1986). Consequently, an ethnographic enquiry was best suited to try and understand human behaviour from participants’ frame of reference (Kamil et al. 1985:72), by spending undirected time with them and participating in some of the activities that informed their daily lives.

This study does not qualify as ‘an ethnography,’ which supposes a comprehensive, long-term study involving daily participant-observation or significant immersion in the culture studied; instead, it adopted an ‘ethnographic perspective,’ which allows for study that is more focused and less wide-ranging, but which still relies on theories of culture and inquiry derived from anthropology and sociology (Green and Bloome 1997). Indeed, there was not complete immersion in the field: data collection spanned a period of thirty-four months (October 2008-July 2011), but direct involvement with participants only took place about

once a week or once a fortnight during the sustained phase of data collection (February 2009-June 2010), and occurred sporadically in the periods before and after that. Furthermore, the depth of involvement with and understanding of participants varied, so this study draws from data obtained from key informants (cf. Section 3.5), as well as one-off interviewees (cf. Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2) and a range of people encountered in various circumstances (cf. Sections 3.3.1, 3.7, 3.8).

The founder of the ethnographic method, pioneering anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, described it as the methodological endeavour “to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of his world” (Malinowski 1922:25). Rather than studying people, ethnography means learning from people (Spradley 1979:3). Central to achieving this is the process of participant-observation, which requires the researcher to slip into three types of roles: (a) that of learner-observer, watching and listening attentively, frequently asking questions, (b) that of actor, participating in (some or all of) the events being observed, and (c) that of transcriber, recording these experiences by way of fieldnotes and diaries (which are added to multimodal data collected during fieldwork). Skills required include visual acuity, keen listening skills, tolerance for detail, and capacity to integrate innumerable parts into shifting wholes (Heath et al. 2008:57). The concept of participant-observation – the combination of roles (a) and (b) – appears oxymoronic: participation suggests engagement and action, whereas observation evokes detachment and reflexion. This begs the question of how direct involvement impacts on the researcher’s capacity to record faithfully what is going on around them, or, conversely, whether standing on the sidelines precludes certain types of understanding that are reserved to those who are taking part. Furthermore, the ‘participant-observer paradox’ resides in the fact that

to collect information we need to observe interaction, but to observe interaction (in ethically acceptable ways) we need to be in the scene; therefore, any time we observe we affect what we see because others monitor our presence and act accordingly. (Duranti 1997:118)

Consequently, unless we conceal our presence completely, there is the possibility that what we are observing is being, unwittingly or purposefully, modified because of our very presence, which raises problems of ecological validity, in other words: “the effects of researchers and the procedures they use on the responses of the people studied” (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983:10). However, this issue affects all types of data collection (apart from covert means), from surveys to interviews. Where an ethnographic approach is comparatively valuable is in its commitment to *repeated* engagement with the field, so that the presence of the researcher becomes less extraordinary, and the chance to see participants in different contexts creates opportunities for contrastive insights, rather than focus on a

single, research-directed event (like an interview). In turn, “the fact that behaviour and attitude are often not stable across contexts and that the researcher may play an important part in shaping the context becomes central to the analysis” (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983:18). Participant-observation is also inherently problematic as it requires both distancing oneself and becoming involved with the object of study, or what Agar (1996:7) calls the “paradox of professional distance and personal involvement.” In his analysis of Lévi-Strauss’ work, Todorov argues that this tension between familiarity and detachment is crucial because it makes it possible to realise the aim of anthropological description, that is, “to discover what is universally human, even in those representatives of humanity which are most remote from us; but one can reach this goal only by undergoing a detachment with regards to one’s own culture” (Todorov 1988:4).

Since it relies on repeated interactions, and familiarisation, with others, ethnographic research cannot pretend to be objective (if such a thing were possible): “[t]he conditions of trust and confidence that good ethnography requires (if one is to gain access to valid knowledge of meanings) make it impossible to take as a goal the role of impartial observer” (Hymes 1996:13). What the researcher can do is to fully document the process of collecting data, in order to acknowledge subjectivity in interpretation.

The process of participant-observation necessarily involves writing fieldnotes, or detailed descriptive accounts of what was witnessed. By doing this,

[t]he ethnographer “inscribes” social discourse; he writes it down. In so doing, he turns it from a passing event, which exists only in its own moment of occurrence, into an account, which exists in its inscriptions and can be reconsulted. (Geertz 1973: 19)

An ethnographic approach also entails a continued involvement with the literature, as the researcher attempts to contextualise fieldwork within theoretical frameworks, before returning to the field to test their understanding, and so forth recursively. In sum, “[t]his back-and-forth observing, noting, reading, thinking, observing, and noting constitute data collection toward fieldwork as an ethnography (Heath et al. 2008:33). Informal exchanges are a key part of fieldwork, although, arguably, even conversation will not be completely non-directive because researchers always have their research questions in the back of their minds and are likely to consciously or unconsciously direct interactions towards their interests (Dewalt & Dewalt 2002:124). More formalised interactions, in the form of interviews, also provide a valuable means of collecting data. This study used semi-structured interviews, insofar as there was no precise interview schedule, although there were broad areas of interest identified beforehand (e.g., migratory trajectory, language practices), and the conversation was allowed to move on to unplanned topics. This approach is beneficial for it “gives access to people’s meaning-endowing capacities and produces rich, deep data

that come in the form of extracts of natural language” (Brewer 2000:66); moreover, “by encouraging respondents to reflect on and relate their experiences at length, the researcher is more likely to obtain rich data which will yield greater insight into the personal experiences of the respondents” (Wooffitt & Widdicombe 2006:31). Part of the task of the ethnographer is to be aware of and to document the unavoidable impact of context and power relations on the data that is co-produced and collected by the researcher. Burawoy (1998:7, 22-23) describes context effects as “stemming from the indissoluble connection between interviewer and respondent, and from the embeddedness of the interview in a wider field of social relations,” whilst he traces power effects to the fact that “as participants in sites invested with hierarchies, competing resources, and struggles over resources, we are trapped in networks of power [and] as observers, we are “on our side,” always there for ulterior reasons.” Thus, a reflexive stance is necessary to attempt to account for these power relations.

The combination of participant-observation, audio (or video) recordings, and the collection of texts and artefacts, constitutes triangulation, a term coined by Denzin (1970) to refer to the use of multiple methods in order to extend the range of data, and which “is the most effective manner in which reactivity and other threats to validity can be handled” (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983:24). In this way, the use of different techniques with different strengths and limitations allows for the cross-validation of conclusions by comparing them using data collected in different ways (Dewalt & Dewalt 2002:102). In this study, the principal methods of data collection were participant-observation, interviews (n=25), and the accumulation of texts and artefacts.

3.2.2 Ethics

Like other forms of data collection, but maybe more so because of its sustained, interactive nature, ethnography requires careful consideration to be given to ethical issues, such as the possible impact of the research on participants. This study followed the Ethics Guidelines set by the British Sociological Association.³⁴ Its priorities were to ensure that no harm was done to participants, either by being intrusive, deceitful, pressurising, or misrepresenting their actions and accounts in the final report. Participants were not misled into thinking that they would gain anything tangible or predetermined from participating in the research; instead participation relied on goodwill and rapport. However, efforts were made to reciprocate help in other ways, as detailed in 3.3.1, 3.4.3 and 3.5.3. Obtaining

³⁴ Retrieved 05/10/08 from <http://www.britisoc.co.uk/equality/Statement+Ethical+Practice.htm>

informed consent involved communicating effectively the purpose, risks, and benefits of the project to potential informants, and, in the case of under-16s (only three were recorded), obtaining signed consent from their parent/guardian. Moreover, it was very important to assure participants that all data would be treated confidentially and be anonymised in the final report. This was done by drawing up and giving to prospective participants an information sheet, in a choice of Spanish or English, and making sure that no uncertainties remained and all potential questions were addressed before starting to record data.³⁵ Participants were told that they could withdraw from the study at any time and were also given the opportunity to be sent a digital copy of the final report, should they want to.

3.2.3 Original project design

This study was originally conceived as an investigation into ethnicity, language and media practices among Latin American families with adolescents, an age group with which I was professionally acquainted and in which I was personally interested. The focus on families was motivated by the idea that “bilingual, bicultural individuals have an expanded set of resources for these omnipresent social negotiations” (Bailey 2007: 29) and that many children of international migrants “straddle national, linguistic, cultural, and ethnic boundaries, embracing multiple social and linguistic worlds” (ibid, p. 34).

In the information sheet given to participants, the aims of the research were defined thus:

Very little is known about Latino families with children in London. This study aims to find out more about:

- how Latino parents and adolescents use Spanish and English
- how Latino adolescents relate to the Latin American community in London
- how Latino parents and adolescents use various media (internet, TV, press...) to connect with Latin American culture.

Further on I explained that I would be interested in looking at:

- how adolescents use English and Spanish when they speak between themselves and with adults
- how adolescents engage with Latin American culture.

Methodologically, my original intention was to conduct participant-observation and interviews, record spontaneous interactions, and investigate adolescents’ profile pages on social networking sites. However, as Hymes (1996:10) observes, “[t]he subject-matter of ethnography – people and their worlds – imposes conditions such that validity and research

³⁵ See Appendix A for a sample of the documents given out: the Information Sheet for Schools & Colleges (English version), the Information Sheet for Participants (Spanish), and the Consent form for over-16s (English).

design have a complexity and openness at the other end of the scale from the experimental design in many fields.” Thus, for unforeseen reasons detailed in 3.4.2, it was not possible to conduct sustained participant-observation with the same adolescents, so the research design evolved to accommodate this. Indeed, for many ethnographers, it is of the essence of the method that it is a dialectical, or feedback (or interactive-adaptive) method and that initial questions may change during the course of the enquiry (Hymes 1996:7). The rest of the chapter charts the evolution of research focus and choice of methods, as obstacles were encountered.

3.3 Finding ways into a field

3.3.1 Entry

Anthropologists don’t study villages (tribes, towns, neighbourhoods...); they study *in* villages.

Clifford Geertz (1973:22)

And increasingly, I might add, they don’t study in villages either, but rather in hospitals, labs, urban neighbourhoods, tourist hotels, the Getty Centre.

James Clifford (1992:98)

As identified in Chapter 2 (2.1, 2.4.2), there is a risk of essentialisation and reification if looking for a ‘tribe,’ in other words, a bounded group with defining cultural and behavioural norms that can be isolated methodologically. Here the aim was not to study a “village,” but to study people and practices explicitly linked to *latinidad*, in London. In this case, there was no pre-determined field as such; the field was a construct that was both material and digital in scope, and mutable. With weak Latin American connections and no link to an established network to start with, finding ways into an “invisible” urban community, in a global, anonymous city, was not straightforward. The first few months of fieldwork were characterised by tentative and disparate attempts to meet people with knowledge of the Latin American community and to come into contact with families. Thus, it was in the acknowledgements that prefaced McIlwaine’s (2007) report on the coping practices of Latin American migrants in London that I came across a reference to grassroots organisation KIPORG and its coordinator, Claudia.³⁶ We subsequently met up at Colombian café *La Bodeguita* (see Plate 3.1), where she introduced me to a senior worker at LAWRS, the Latin

³⁶ KIPORG (Knowledge is Power) was an NGO that sought to empower Latin Americans so that they could overcome barriers to success, by organising a language and cultural exchange programme, support for social leaders, and promoting Latin American social networks.

American Women's Rights organisation which commissioned the report on Latin Americans (cf. Section 1.2.2) and for which I would eventually volunteer (see below, Section 3.10).



Plate 3.1 *La Bodeguita* in Elephant and Castle

In addition, an article on family relations and integration (“**Help your child integrate into the British community**”) in a free Latino newspaper mentioned that:

The contact was made through Jesús Pérez, the chaplain of the Latin community of [St George's Catholic School in Maida Vale] so that, with the help of *Teléfonos de la Esperanza*, parents could be educated as well. (*Extra* 25/02-10/03/2008)

Subsequently, I contacted Padre Jesús and eventually met up with him. Claudia, the LAWRS worker, and Padre Jesús all described Latin American families as working long hours, reporting racism and bullying, as well as having difficulties with intergenerational communication and with integrating in London. These meetings led to being invited to events such as the *Día de la Raza* celebration at St George's Cathedral and the launch of the

London branch of the transnational NGO *Teléfono de la Esperanza* (see Table 3.1).³⁷ At the latter event, the narrative that emerged from the various speeches was one of adversity, resilience, and altruism: here were individuals who had come together to provide, on a voluntary basis, much-needed emotional support to the Latino community in London. This initial phase of data collection was characterised by being steered, by professionals and community activists, towards highly symbolic events that celebrated togetherness, problem-solving, and integration – a representation that was in stark contrast to the “dog-eat-dog world” described by Block (2008:13). These meetings also started ‘snowball sampling,’ in other words, being introduced to further potential informants. These were nearly all Colombian, which reflected the higher numbers of Colombians in London and their greater involvement in Latin American community organisations. Being able to speak Spanish fluently meant that all conversations were held in Spanish, and, given my peninsular accent, it was widely assumed that I was Spanish.

| OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION – LONDON: FIRST PHASE (OCTOBER 2008 – MARCH 2009) | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD | |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - meeting with Padre Jesús at the Latin American Chaplaincy, in Kennington - <i>Día de la Raza</i> celebration at St George’s Cathedral, in Southwark - KIPORG event at Peruvian restaurant Tito’s, in London Bridge - Latin American Diasporas conference, at University of London - meeting with Claudia and LAWRS worker at Colombian café <i>La Bodeguita</i>, in Elephant and Castle - launch of <i>Teléfono de la Esperanza</i>, in Maida Vale - visit to Aculco radio station, in Brixton |
| AUDIO RECORDING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview with Cinthya, at her home (100’) - Interview with Sonia, at her workplace (29’) - Interview with Paulina, at her workplace (56’) |
| COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND ARTEFACTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Articles and advertisements from free Latin American newspapers |

Table 3.1 Overview of data collection – London: first phase

Access to the first interviewee, Cinthya (16, Peruvian), was facilitated by a fellow doctoral student, who suggested that I speak to her after she had begun collaborating with Cinthya’s mother, an informant met through KIPORG. Cinthya and her mother had known in advance that I was a sixth-form teacher and had asked our intermediary if I could help Cinthya with her studies, so the interview was followed by a discussion about study skills and applications to university, which enabled productive reciprocity. This first interview

³⁷ The NGO *Teléfono de la Esperanza* (‘Telephone of Hope’) was founded and is based in Spain, but has branches in London and in various Latin American countries. It provides emotional and psychological support through a hotline and psychological courses.

with an adolescent provided valuable insights into questions of migration and language, and also opened up an area of investigation that was not initially part of the research design, but subsequently formed part of many discussions with participants, that of the representation of Latina femininities (cf. Chapter 6). Cinthya's account forms part of the data analysed in Sections 6.4 and 6.5. The next two interviews took place with adult women of Mexican and Colombian origin, both successfully integrated, linguistically and professionally, in British society and whose children were reported to be fluent bilinguals. They differed inasmuch as, upon leaving Mexico, one had created for herself an almost exclusively Anglo-European social network and presented herself as an outsider in relation to a London Latino community; while the other was heavily involved with Latin Americans in particular and migration in general, and presented herself as an influential voice within the Latin American community in London. These encounters were useful for representing different forms of community participation and for emphasising the importance of bilingual proficiency for social integration.

This first phase of fieldwork provided opportunities to witness 'extraordinary' events (e.g. the *Día de la Raza* celebration at St George's Cathedral) and to meet interviewees on a one-off basis, but they were not conducive to sustained observation. Hence, I sought an institutional environment (a school, given the research focus on young people) where it would be possible to observe and interact with people of Latin American descent on a regular basis. I tried several avenues: secondary schools in Lambeth (given the higher proportion of Latin Americans in this borough), Latin American complementary schools across London, EAL departments in various boroughs, and FE colleges through an ESOL connection. Eventually, the ESOL Curriculum Manager at an FE college responded and expressed enthusiasm about my research.

3.3.2 Southside College: a dead-end

| OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION – SOUTHSIDE COLLEGE (FEBRUARY – MARCH 2009) | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD | |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conversations with the ESOL Curriculum Manager and with an Ecuadorian teacher, at Southside College - Initial meeting with students, at Southside College |
| AUDIO RECORDING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with students, at Southside College: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TJ and Jaime (52') - Tatiana (35') - Rosario and Raúl (52') - Liliana (57') |
| COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND ARTEFACTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emails from the ESOL director |

Table 3.2 Overview of data collection – Southside College

Southside College is located in and serves one of the most deprived boroughs of the capital. The vast majority of its learners are not ethnically White British and a significant proportion has English as a second language. Negotiating access occurred against the backdrop of an Ofsted Inspection, whose report praised the institution's pastoral support but otherwise was highly critical of virtually every aspect of its provision, with the exception of the ESOL department. The ESOL Curriculum Manager was willing to provide access to some of his students, having described in an email how there was "a large contingent of Latin Americans on ESOL courses (14-19) this year" (private email, 20/10/08). I was introduced to nine students, aged 16 to 18, with whom I arranged interviews. These were to take place at a later date, in pairs to make the process less intimidating. I also explained that participation was entirely voluntary; a third dropped out by the time of the first interviews. Nevertheless, four interviews took place at the College with a total of three Colombians, two Ecuadorians, and one Chinese/Peruvian. However, when I returned at the end of the summer term to conduct a pre-arranged focus group, I was told that almost all interviewees had left the college. My repeated attempts to contact them, by email and text message, were unsuccessful and, given the practical difficulties that had beset this phase of fieldwork, I decided to focus my attention on ELA where I was established by then. Before I turn my attention to what was to become my main fieldsite, ELA, there is a methodological point worth making in relation to interviewing.

Semi- and unstructured interviews require great interviewer skills; the interviewer needs to be able to sustain and control conversation, to know when to probe, prompt and when to listen and remain silent and to read the social cues from respondents and know when to stop pushing a line of questioning (Brewer 2000:66). Interviewing Liliana (18, Colombian) also opened up an issue that had hitherto not arisen in previous interviews. Unlike other participants, Liliana was not only interested in telling her story, but also in reciprocating questions. So, as the conversation flowed very easily, she asked me questions such as whether I had or wanted children and why not, and on my use of make-up, and why. Considering that our conversation had been very amicable, and punctuated by laughter and personal disclosures about her boyfriend, her body, and her beautifying practices, this was a 'natural' turn that one would expect in a 'normally' occurring exchange between two people who are getting on well conversationally. This was the first interviewee to 'turn the tables,' as it were, and I took the view that sharing one's personal experience can be an important part of forming a sound research relationship. A degree of personal involvement may also be strategically fitting since "[a] few minutes of easygoing talk interspersed here and there throughout the interview will pay enormous dividends in rapport" (Spradley 1979:58).

Referring to a harmonious relationship between ethnographer and informant, rapport means that a basic sense of trust has developed, which allows for the free flow of information; it is integral to ethnographic interviewing along with eliciting information (Spradley 1979:58).

Although I cannot make claims to ethnographic knowledge of the Southside College participants, since I only met them twice, I decided to incorporate their accounts to the thesis (in Sections 6.4 and 6.5), because they were speaking from different positions to the ones I was exposed to subsequently. Unlike most of the key informants described below (Section 3.5), they had migrated to London fairly recently (between nine months to four years before) and were following a vocational, rather than an academic route in their studies.

3.4 Destination found: ELA

My attempts to find a school, where I could meet Latin American teenagers and their families, were finally successful when I managed to get in touch with Euclides, who welcomed me to the Latin American complementary school that he directed. In this section, I focus on describing the school (Section 3.4.1), as well as field relations with students (Section 3.4.2) and staff (Section 3.4.3), clarifying how these shaped data collection.

3.4.1 The school

| OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION – ELA (FEBRUARY 2009 – JULY 2011) | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD | |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visits to ELA (x 46), which amounted to about 255 hours - Staff training day, at Euclides' home - End of year school trip, at the seaside - Christmas social, at Euclides' home |
| AUDIO RECORDING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with parents, at ELA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pilar (12') - Álvaro (34') - Patricia (83') - Jackeline (88') - Interviews with students, at ELA: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gabriela (21') - Gabriela and Ana (18') - Gabriela and Cindy (28') - Interview with speech therapist Sandra, at my home (33') - Interview with teacher Luz, at my home (66') |
| COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND ARTEFACTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lesson materials - Photographs of end-of-term shows - School documents (including invitations to events, letters to parents, school leaflets, funding applications, and online representations of ELA) - Emails from Euclides - Freedom of Information requests to local authority X regarding |

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | the funding of complementary schools in the borough - Reports from funding organisations that have supported ELA |
|--|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Table 3.3 Overview of data collection – ELA

Several members of staff, who had been involved with the school since it began, coincided in recounting how ELA was co-founded by Euclides and another Colombian man, and opened in September 2001. Those who were present at the start also remembered different aspects of its beginnings. For instance, teacher Belén, who had then just migrated from Peru (cf. Section 3.5.3), spoke very enthusiastically about the presence of adults and children from different Latin American countries. She described how **“when you live in your country, the possibility never exists even in your head that you would one day share with people from a neighbouring country like Ecuador, Colombia,... but coming to ELA ... we were all equal”** (Interview 20/11/09), thereby exemplifying the process of panethnic identification that occurs as a result of migration (cf. Section 2.2.1). By contrast, a former student, Monika, described her class as “all just Colombian kids” (Interview 12/08/09). The exact demographics of the school when it started were unclear, but all agreed that it had since changed locations three times. By the time I joined the school in February 2009, it was based in a Church of England primary school located in an inner-city neighbourhood and surrounded by council estates. It had grown to accommodate between sixty to ninety children every week, but the accountant estimated that there were about 120 children enrolled. Pupils came from various boroughs, such as Haringey, Camden, and Barnet.

Every Saturday, the school day started at 10am, with assembly taking place between 10.15 and 10.30, and finished at 3pm, although some families stayed on afterwards, chatting, while the children played outside. There were six or seven classes (depending on numbers), which grouped children according to age and proficiency in Spanish (roughly ages 3-4, 5-6, 6-7, 8-9, 9-10, and older). Although the school officially accepted youngsters aged between 3 and 16, in the time I was there, very few teenagers attended regularly and the oldest group was primarily made up of 11 to 12 year-olds. The three youngest groups were given a range of linguistic, manual, and creative activities throughout the day. For the oldest groups, the morning was dedicated to language classes, while in the afternoon, there was a choice between art, music, dance, and drama workshops. Keeping with its motto, **“We educate children and young people according to our Latin American values,”**³⁸ the school leaflet boasted teachers who were “*nativos*” (natives of Latin America or native speakers of Spanish) and **“highly qualified.”** While the permanent teachers came from Latin America

³⁸ “*Formamos a la niñez y juventud con ideal Latinoamericano.*” Letters to parents were headed “*Formamos a la niñez con sentimiento latinoamericano*” (“We teach children with a Latin American feeling”).

(Colombia, Chile, Venezuela, and Peru) and had worked as teachers or nursery nurses outside the school, most of the arts instructors and volunteers were Colombian (but also included volunteers from Italy and Spain at one point) and varied widely in teaching experience (see Table 3.4). The school leaflet also advertised classes in Spanish, literature, mathematics, Latin American geography and history, and publicised “**GCSE and A Level in Spanish.**” In the time that I was there, I witnessed almost exclusively language classes and creative workshops, which had a more or less Latin American focus (with some basic Latin American geography and history, see also Section 5.2.2).

| Position | Name | Country of origin |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Director | Euclides | Colombia |
| Teacher (ages 10-14) | | |
| Accountant | Fernanda | Colombia |
| Teacher (ages 3-4) | Ángela | Colombia |
| Teacher (ages 5-6) | Belén | Peru |
| Teacher (ages 6-7) | Paloma | Venezuela |
| Teacher (ages 8-9) | María | Colombia |
| Teacher (ages 8-9) | Olivia | Chile |
| Teacher (ages 9-10) | Luz | Colombia |
| Teacher (ages 10-14) | Ximena | Colombia |
| Dance teacher | Pamela | Colombia |
| Drama teacher | Vicente | Colombia |
| Music teacher | Rafael | Colombia |
| Music teacher | Gustavo | Bolivia |
| Arts teacher | Ofelia | Colombia |
| Arts teacher | Violeta | Colombia |
| Totals | Women: 84% Men: 26% | Colombians: 73% |

Table 3.4 Staff employed by ELA between 2009 and 2010

Throughout the day, a Colombian family served Colombian dishes – such as *buñuelos* (fritters), *pan de bono* (a ring-shaped cheesy bread), *chicharrón* (fried pork), and *chorizo* (sausage) – in the hall, while children had the opportunity to use the playground. The food stall and football pitch were very popular among families, although several teachers complained that the food was too unhealthy (it consisted of fried or baked carbohydrates and meat). At the end of each term, there was a big show with a seasonal focus (Christmas, spring, summer), to which all families were invited. This gave the different groups the opportunity to showcase their work and the parents the chance to meet the language teachers and discuss the end-of-term report. At the end of the school year, a day trip was usually organised; the one I took part in went to Worthing, on the South Coast.

ELA also organised or facilitated services for adults. Euclides’ wife, Fernanda, ran an informal arts and crafts workshop which had a small but loyal following of mothers, who spent the day chatting and sewing in the foyer. In addition, there were occasional visitors

who spoke at assembly: activists who came to inform and recruit (e.g., Strangers into Citizens), and professionals who ran courses that aimed to support and empower migrants (e.g. *Teléfono de la Esperanza*, see Section 3.3).³⁹ Assembly was also used to communicate school achievements, such as the silver and a gold awards from the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRC). Euclides' involvement in multiple enterprises was not kept separate from the school, and he often used it as a place to meet activists and artists, and to coordinate projects; his mobile phone rang very frequently.

3.4.2 Field relations with students

When I first met Euclides, it was clear that negotiating entry would entail brokering an agreement that would be mutually beneficial. When he asked me what I would bring to the school, in return for using them as “**guinea-pigs**,” I offered my teaching skills, explaining that I was a qualified Spanish teacher (Fieldnotes 31/01/09). We agreed that I would offer language classes to parents in the morning, with the possibility of running workshops on Spanish GCSE and A Level examinations. In return, I would be able to spend the day at ELA, to observe, record, and interview at will. Cautious, Euclides required identification from my supervisor, a work reference, and perhaps most importantly, a proposal for ELA's management committee, to be available in English and Spanish. Delamont (2002:118) observes that “[o]ne of the important lessons during one's first days in the field is finding out what the access negotiated in advance and in theory/the abstract means in practice.” Thus, once these requirements were met, I was told that, in fact, there was little interest from the parents and that it would be more useful if I were to assist with the teaching of his own Spanish class. Out of his twelve regular pupils, aged 10 to 14, three quarters were girls, including his daughter. Eventually we agreed that I would teach the first part of the lesson (30-45 minutes), which would enable him to speak to parents, after which he would return and I would work with pupils, individually, on their writing. My experience of having taught and examined Spanish GCSE and A Level was an obvious benefit in his eyes. Indeed, at various times during fieldwork, I was able to support students in their preparation for their GCSE Spanish exams, by supplying past papers and providing professional insight into how to pass the examinations.

Euclides introduced me to his class as a language teacher and the pupils automatically called me “*profe*” thereafter (*profe*’ being the abbreviation used in the Spanish-speaking world to refer to a *profesor*, a teacher). This association with teaching was very helpful

³⁹ Strangers into Citizens is a national campaign calling for a one-off regularisation of long-term irregular migrants in the UK.

with teachers, as it created a shared frame of reference, but it was not conducive to building rapport with Euclides' students, who, de facto, became pupils and informants. Gillespie (1995) discusses the advantages and problems associated with this dual role: on the one hand, it facilitates access to young people, and grants the researcher a recognisable role within an institution that students are familiar with. On the other hand, as she remarks, "teacher-student relations inevitably involve relations of power, raising ethical questions of responsibility"; moreover "it could be argued that to use students as informants in the pursuit of one's academic goals may lead to the abuse of power, in particular to the relegation of teaching responsibilities in favour of doing research" (1995:69). This is an important insight; as a teacher-researcher, the focus is no longer only the progress of the students, but also the obtaining of rich and interesting data (which in this case is not determined by the accuracy of their language or how 'good' their work is). Gillespie was able to overcome many potential ethical problems by situating her work within Action Research, which created a focus on improving her pedagogic practice and the learning of her students. Maybe more importantly, Gillespie knew her students well and these "shared past experiences assisted in developing trust and reciprocity and allowed for relaxed, informal and casual social encounters with most young people" (ibid.). Coming in unannounced in the middle of the school year with an ambiguous role was far removed from Gillespie's experience. Lappalainen (2002) was also concerned about how to situate herself in relation to pupil-informants. In her doctoral research in two pre-schools, she opted for the "least adult role," a research position that eschews a disciplining stance towards child informants, but she ultimately struggled with this arrangement. Looking back, I realised that I too had initially opted for a "least adult role": I avoided reprimanding pupils, not telling them to be quiet at assembly for example, or turning a blind eye to their texting under the table.

A few weeks after my arrival, Euclides announced that he would be going away to Colombia for a while so would I mind taking over the group for the next three weeks, doing the end-of-term reports, and conducting the meetings with the parents? I did not feel that I was in a position to negotiate these (arguably excessive) demands. This facilitated two insights: (a) the vulnerability of the student researcher when relying on the good will of a gate-keeper, (b) the unexpectedness of ethnographic research, which involves "assuming roles that could not have been planned, and witnessing events that could not have been foreseen" (Gillespie 1995:61). This period saw a dramatic shift in how I was perceived as I became a figure of authority (the one who formally evaluated their progress and their behaviour, and who would speak to their parents about it) but one who had no status in the school. As my involvement grew (preparing and delivering 2h15 lessons, dealing with discipline problems), so did my capacity to observe and recollect in a cool and detached

manner diminish, thus making it more difficult to realise the goals of interpretive research, that is, to strive to see things from the participants' point of view. Furthermore, being perceived as a supply teacher (i.e., substandard and emasculated) went against my efforts to appear as an approachable, peripheral adult whom it would be fine to talk to and be recorded by. One of the undeniable advantages, though, was the opportunity to meet parents, at length, at the end of term. Although, as a teacher, I felt ill-equipped to deal with their questions about their child's progress (having only taught on four Saturdays and not having access to prior summative or formative assessment), as a researcher, it gave me the chance to enquire about language practices within the family. When Euclides returned, I indicated to the class that I was there primarily as a researcher, and not as a teacher, notably by insisting on being called Sofia (as my name was systematically 'hispanised' during fieldwork), rather than "*profe*."

The not entirely positive experience of taking on Euclides' class had important repercussions for the research design. Both to distance myself from the teaching role that had been assigned to me in the older group, and to gain an understanding of how the school worked as a whole, I subsequently spent more and more time with the younger groups. Euclides understood this and he passed on the teaching responsibility for his group to young volunteers. This break gave me the opportunity to collaborate and bond with other teachers, and signalled a development in my research focus, as I no longer concentrated on the (few) adolescents in the school. Crucially, had I not moved away from the oldest group, I may not have become aware of the extent of the presence of non-Spanish-speaking, non-Latin Americans in the school, who were concentrated in the younger groups (cf. Section 5.3.4).

3.4.3 Field relations with staff

To return to the question of how ethnicity impacted field relations (evoked in 2.3.2), my light brown, indeterminate appearance provided some common ground with participants, as did being a migrant in the UK although, as a British passport holder, this was more symbolic than a reflection of shared experience. In addition, my French origins did not carry the same postcolonial connotations as being Spanish, for instance. In terms of everyday interactions, the strongest markers of alterity were tied to lifestyle and to accent, rather than ethnic origin or migratory trajectory: being vegetarian and having a Peninsular Spanish accent were reminders, for many, that I was decidedly not Latin American. Euclides usually introduced me as French – "*Sofía francesa*" – so this is how I was known, although many people were confused by the fact that I sounded British when I spoke English and Spanish when I spoke

Spanish. For example, when Euclides' wife, Fernanda, introduced me to her nephew (of Colombian descent) as French, he was

surprised by this. Tells me I don't look or sound French. Fernanda says I look more like them (i.e. with darker skin; although Fernanda is very fair). He asks me whether I've lived in Spain, tells me I sound Spanish, that my Spanish is very good, even better than his.

Data extract 3.A Fieldnotes (24/10/09)

In this vignette, several ideologies are crystallised. Firstly, in terms of ethnicity, there is the association of *latinidad* with brown skin (as described in Section 2.5, and to which I will return in Section 6.2.1). Secondly, in terms of language, there is (a) the expectation that language use reflects ethnicity (expecting me to *sound* French) and (b) the superiority of the colonial variant (Peninsular Spanish) over those of the former colonies (here, Colombian Spanish) (cf. Section 2.4.2). In addition, a sense of 'linguistic inferiority' could be compounded by my professional affiliation as a language teacher and, therefore, as an enforcer of norms that divide language forms between 'acceptable' and 'erroneous' or 'deviant'. However, the badge of teacher and a peninsular accent were not necessarily guarantees of credibility and legitimacy, as I found out during a parent/teacher meeting where I had to assume Euclides' position (see above). Clearly dissatisfied with my performance as stand-in teacher, an Ecuadorian mother complained that her daughter found it difficult to understand my "*acento cerrado*" (thick accent) (Fieldnotes 04/04/09), a comment that acted as an exclusionary discursive move. These examples show how, in subtle ways, accents served to situate others in a linguistic, and by extension, social hierarchy (see also Section 5.3.2).

Elsewhere, the staff were sensitive to the fact that I may not have been familiar with Latin American lexis, and sometimes checked my understanding. Thus I found out that when Colombians described a pupil as *tenaz*, it did not signify that the child was tenacious (as I understood the word in Peninsular Spanish), but that s/he was difficult. At other times, my ignorance of more colloquial language was laid bare by my inability to follow the conversation correctly. The following vignette illustrates such an occasion (Luz was then 27, and Euclides in his 50s):

Luz arrives. We ask her about the burn on her wrist; she says she hurt herself with oil when cooking chicken. Euclides refers to "*pollo*" [chicken] jokingly; I say something about needing to be vegetarian. I have misunderstood the joke and they explain it to me: "*pollo*" means a younger man (normally used by an older man; similar to 'spring chicken') and Euclides was saying that with an older man, she wouldn't have such problems. She rolls her eyes and laughs drily at this sleazy joke.

Data extract 3.B Fieldnotes (13/06/09)

This extract is also included here to give a sense of general gender relations at ELA, where all the permanent staff and most of the volunteers were women, managed by one man. The weight of patriarchal norms in Latin America are examined in Section 6.6.1.

Integrating the school community depended on time, trust, and reciprocity, rather than a shared frame of reference about sociolinguistic or ethnographic research. The parents and staff I spoke to usually expressed interest and opinions about language use within the family, but even though I explained what I was doing on several occasions, even by the end of fieldwork, I would be introduced as **“My friend Sofia, she’s French. She’s here because... why are you here again?”** It was a humbling reminder that what may make a lot of sense (and be worthwhile) to academics may seem fairly abstract and arcane to most people.

Notwithstanding the fact that participant-observation (especially frequent note-taking) could appear strange to members of the school community, it was precisely the means through which acceptance was achieved. The sheer fact of attending week after week, being on hand (e.g. to do photocopies, work one-on-one with a child, or supervise the class momentarily), and taking part in the whole school day, from assembly to staff meetings, resulted in recognisability and appreciation. The value of regular attendance and constant assistance became even clearer when a visiting PhD student from a Colombian university discussed his difficulties with collecting data at ELA:

Ideally he would like to have more than one extended interview with every ELA teacher but that is not happening, so he has devised a set of about 20 questions for them to answer at home. Looking at his incredibly long list of complex questions, I figure that the response, done properly, wouldn’t be too different from an essay. ... I don’t say anything, although I think it very unlikely he’ll get much response; if he does, it’ll probably be very brief. I have the considerable advantage of already being accepted by the ELA staff, having spent about 8-9 months with them and having helped several in one way or another ... I do say that it’s quite difficult to ask them to give extra, unpaid time on a weekend (to stay for an interview).

Data extract 3.C Fieldnotes (14/11/09)

This case demonstrates how “[a]ccess in itself is no use to the researcher without the opportunity to develop trust and rapport” (Erickson 1986:142). This student had not built relationships based on mutuality of benefit and he lacked a respected profile among the staff; as a result, his response rate was almost inexistent.

The ethnographer can expect to assume a variety of roles. Indeed I helped a teacher, María, secure a visa to Canada by helping her and her partner meet the necessary requirements, which included being able to converse in French. At the request of another teacher, I contacted former secondary colleagues to facilitate a teaching placement for her, and helped the speech therapist with writing her first MA assignment (cf. Section 5.2.1). I contributed to the development of a website for the school and created an ‘ELA Reunion

Group' page on Facebook (cf. Section 3.6) as well as a Yahoo newsgroup to enable teachers to pool and share resources, although neither of these two projects took off. I translated the school leaflet into English, helped with funding applications, and attended a course on fundraising on behalf of ELA (I will return to the question of funding in the next chapter, Section 4.2.2). I became the 'GCSE Spanish expert', acting as a port of call for parents, explaining the system to young teachers, and helping four students prepare for the exam. Following Euclides' request, I also gave a presentation to parents on the British education system. Most importantly, I acted as a teaching assistant, which was a far more appropriate role than the one that had been imposed by Euclides; the hierarchy was clear for students and the tasks were secondary enough for me to still be able to observe and to take notes. A key part of building trust with teachers was to make clear that I was not there to assess the quality of their teaching, and that I was not observing 'on behalf' of the director (although he did ask me, in vain, to report on things that could be improved). Indeed, one source of difficulty with trust is the tendency of informants to assume that the researcher's purposes are in some way evaluative, and that these concerns make great sense, given the ubiquity of observation for evaluative purposes in schools (Erickson 1986:142). Establishing rapport and trustworthiness was an ongoing process, as "[t]rust has to be continually worked at, negotiated and renegotiated, confirmed and thereafter repeatedly affirmed" (Brewer 2000:86). Overall, I was able to develop friendly relationships with most of the staff, including three of the younger, childless teachers, with whom I socialised outside of ELA, thus giving me a better contextual understanding of their discourse on language (cf. Sections 5.2.2, 5.3.2) and embodied practices (cf. Sections 6.4, 6.5). Most significantly, members of three families became 'key informants,' whom Agar (1996:167) describes as the "few people in the community with whom, for a variety of reason, a close relationship was established."

3.5 Admittance to three family homes

Although "[f]ew educational researchers try to get access to families" (Delamont 2002:109), my intention was always to be able to observe family members outside of an institutional setting. However I started without established rapport or recognisable status, and without knowing how to 'invite myself over.' Instead, I allowed relationships at ELA to develop, slowly, but found the prospect of getting access to people's homes a source of uncertainty. It was six months after I had begun fieldwork at ELA that I started being invited into the homes of the director, Euclides, and of two teachers, Ángela and Belén. This turn occurred after I had spent time helping them in or outside the classroom (see above, Section

3.4.3). These collaborations were essential to building trust and rapport, and hence be allowed access to their homes and to their children.

The aims of this section are three-fold: (a) to make the key informants in this thesis more *alive* to the reader, by drawing on participants' representations of their trajectory, and complementing them with some descriptive detail, and (b) to illustrate the relevance of some of the theoretical issues outlined in Chapter 2 to participants (e.g. the campaign for ethnic recognition, cf. Section 2.3.2), and (c) to provide an empirical context for these participants' stance on language practices (cf. Sections 5.2 and 5.3.2) and embodied practices (cf. Sections 6.4, 6.5, 6.6).

3.5.1 Euclides' family

| OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION – EUCLIDES' FAMILY | |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD | |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working with Euclides and Fernanda on applications for funding, at their home (x 2) - Meetings with Euclides, at café in Islington (x 3) - Silvia having lunch at my home - Meeting with Euclides and Silvia, for the launch of 'No longer invisible...', at City Hall |
| AUDIO RECORDING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview with Fernanda's mother, at ELA (31') - Interview with Silvia, at ELA (65') - Home recordings by Silvia and her mother (x 3) (total: 61') |
| COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND ARTEFACTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collection of short stories written by London Latino migrants, given by Euclides - Emails from Euclides - Text messages from Silvia |

Table 3.5 Overview of data collection – Euclides' family

Euclides came from one of the departments in the *Eje Cafetero* (the coffee-growing region) in Colombia. In this, his migration trajectory was not unusual, as Guarnizo (2008:32) found that the majority of Colombians in London originate from only four regions: the *Valle del Cauca* (30%), the *Eje Cafetero* (20%), Bogotá (20%), and Antioquia (12%). Guarnizo (2008:38) describes these four areas as the most developed, and wielding the most economic and political weight, in the country. A charismatic man in his 50s, Euclides described his origins as rural and modest. The trajectory he recounted was one of going to university, studying up to Masters level, teaching in various contexts, from remote rural colleges to urban university, and arriving in London as a political refugee in the mid-1990s. He explained that, as a young man, he had been opposed to learning English because he associated it with the imperialist USA, and that consequently, without English proficiency, he initially had to do cleaning jobs in London. He told bittersweet anecdotes of working as a cleaning supervisor. For instance, in the business offices they had to clean, he recounted

seeing some of the male cleaners, dressed in suits and sitting at office desks, while one of them took pictures. These photographs were to be sent back home, to girlfriends and parents, to make them believe that they had landed a good job in London. During the week, Euclides worked as a Spanish teacher, but he also described himself as being involved in range of other activities, including charity projects in Colombia, Latin American community initiatives in London, and being part of an international network called New Humanism. During our first meeting, he explained that part of the motivation behind the free newspaper *Voz Latina* (Latin Voice), for which he wrote, was to present a positive image of the Latin American community, so as to go beyond the image of drug-traffickers and thieves. He spoke passionately of his desire to help Latin American families in London; on many occasions, he described how parents had come to him with their problems (with their adolescent child for example) and how he had been involved in supporting them. His galvanising motto was “*fuera, alegría, amor*” (strength, joy, love), which he proclaimed at the end of each assembly. He was not confident speaking English and we always spoke Spanish together.

Euclides was married to Fernanda, with whom he had two children: a son in primary school and a daughter, Gabriela, in secondary school. In her late 40s, Fernanda came from the *Llanos* in Colombia, a region dedicated to agriculture and cattle farming, activities in which her family had traditionally been involved. She had first arrived in the UK when she was 18, wanting to learn English and to travel. She ended up staying in London, where her mother and several of her siblings eventually joined her. As the only one who had formally studied English, Fernanda played a key role in organising their migration, spending considerable time and effort arranging benefits and obtaining British nationality for them. At ELA, she spent the whole day sitting in the foyer, welcoming families, taking payments, and attending to the needs of teachers and children. From spending time together in the foyer, conversing with mothers, and collaborating on funding applications, we formed a bond. Euclides introduced me to his niece, Silvia, when she was visiting ELA to do some classroom observation. Silvia was then 26 and living with her mother. She was born in London and identified as British, of Colombian parents and with Colombian roots. She had visited Colombia on five occasions, mainly to visit her maternal family. Her mother had migrated from the same area as Euclides and worked as a cleaning supervisor. She had left school at 13 and had not felt equipped to teach her daughter Spanish so Silvia was brought up speaking English. Then when Silvia started attending the complementary school where Euclides used to work before ELA, she developed confidence and proficiency in Spanish; her BA was in Spanish and Philosophy at a London university. She identified as a feminist and was reading an MA in Philosophy. We practically only communicated in English, as this

was her preferred language. She was interested in how much she switched between English and Spanish at home so offered to do some home recordings. She provided me with two recordings, during which she prepared and ate meals with her mother. Subsequently, opportunities arose to collect similar recordings from the other two key informant families, described below.

3.5.2 Ángela's family

| OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION – ÁNGELA'S FAMILY | |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD | |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dinner with Ángela, Monika, and Yesika, at restaurant in Leicester Square - Going out to Mango Latin Club in Seven Sisters with Monika and Bibiana and then sleeping over at their home - Meeting up with Monika, at bar in Waterloo - Dinner at Ángela's home (x 3) - Ángela and Yesika having lunch at my home |
| AUDIO RECORDING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview with Monika & Yesika, at their home (114') - Interview with Bibiana, at ELA (73') - Interview with Ángela, at her home (85') - Home recording by Ángela, Monika, Yesika, and Bibiana (23') |
| COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND ARTEFACTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Text messages and emails from Ángela, Monika, and Bibiana |

Table 3.6 Overview of data collection – Ángela's family

Ángela joined ELA when the school first started, through being a friend of Fernanda. By the time I stopped fieldwork at ELA, she was finding the six-day week too demanding and eventually left the school. Ángela originally came from a coastal town in the Colombian region of Antioquia, which had the misfortune of being strategically important for the export of drugs through Panama and hence was unsafe. She later moved to Medellin but was forced to leave in 1994, one year after the killing of Pablo Escobar and the dismantling of the Medellin cartel. At the height of the drug-related violence that was devastating Colombia, a newly-widowed Ángela migrated to London with her three daughters (then aged 6 and 2). She took them back to Antioquia once, for a six-week stay, when the twins, Monika and Yesika, were 17 and Bibiana was 13. Forming a very tight-knit family unit, Ángela and her daughters spent a lot of time with their extended Colombian family network. Learning, healthy living, and her Catholic faith were very important to Ángela, who was in her 40s and hoped, one day, to leave her job as a nursery nurse to do a degree or diploma in Social Work, Midwifery, or Nursing. In 2011, her wishes for International Women's Day read:

Sofia, together we share the same inspiration from our God who gave us the good fortune of being a woman and everything that this beautiful being involves!

Happy women's day my friend, may God bless you today and for ever! ☺ with love Ángela⁴⁰

Data extract 3.D Text message from Ángela (08/03/11)

Having grown up in a modest and patriarchal family, Ángela described how she had not gone to university as it was just not what her family did. The twins were some of the first in their family to go to university; Yesika was reading Civil Engineering and was interested in sustainable development, while Monika read Molecular Biology and was thinking of becoming a teacher. Bibiana was studying A2 Maths, Economics, and Spanish. Ángela's daughters had attended Catholic schools in London and had grown up with multiethnic friendship groups. They came across as confident and articulate young women, who liked to, inter alia, dress up when going out, watch Colombian *telenovelas* (soaps) on the internet, and engage in discussion. The twins were very critical of what they described as sexist and objectifying pressures both in Colombia and among Colombians in London. With me, Ángela spoke almost exclusively in Spanish, while her daughters preferred to speak English, so communication was often asymmetrical. For instance, during a meal, I usually communicated in Spanish with Ángela and in English with her daughters, who used both English and Spanish to address their mother. The twins were keen to answer questions and to tell anecdotes about the Latin American community, and expressed interest in my research and my background. Two of the sisters took me to a Latin club, so that I could experience this aspect of London life. I established a friendly rapport with this family, and kept in touch with Ángela after leaving the field.

3.5.3 Belén's family

| OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION – BELÉN'S FAMILY | |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD | |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Afternoon visit to Belén's home (x 2) - Fundraising event for flood victims in Cusco, with performance by community dance group, in Camberwell - Rehearsal of community dance group, in Lambeth - <i>Día de la Madre</i> celebration with community dance group, in Brixton - Performance by community dance group, at Peckham Theatre |
| AUDIO RECORDING | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interview with Belén and Mandana, at their home (158') - Home recording with family and friends present (Belén, Eduardo, Mandana, Javier, friends) (6') - Home recording with community dance group friends present (Belén, Eduardo, 1 Colombian couple, 1 Ecuadorian couple) (33') |
| COLLECTION OF TEXTS | - Invitations to for community dance group performances (flyers) |

⁴⁰ On the importance of Women's Day in Latin America, see 5.2.2.

| | |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AND ARTEFACTS | and emails) - Text messages and emails from Belén and Mandana |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|

Table 3.7 Overview of data collection – Belén’s family

When Belén was pregnant with her son, she and her eleven-year-old daughter, Mandana, left their town on the northern Peruvian coast to join Belén’s husband, Eduardo, in London. Belén had been a primary school teacher in Peru and, after she had learnt sufficient English, was able to find work as a primary school teacher in London. Despite not knowing any English when she arrived, Mandana eventually flourished at her inner-city comprehensive school and, when I met her, was aged 20 and studying Medicine at a Russell Group university in London. Like Ángela, Belén became involved with ELA from the start, thanks to a friend who was teaching dance there. According to Belén, at the beginning, when life in London was emotionally and professionally difficult, ELA was a lifeline; the day spent at ELA represented “**a day of union, like saying ‘let’s go and see the family’**” (Interview 20/11/09). She had remained at ELA ever since, while her daughter Mandana had returned on several occasions to help her mother or to teach some dance classes. Their family was very involved in performing arts: Eduardo was a professional musician, Mandana a dancer, and both Mandana and Belén were involved with choreography. They had formed their own Latin American dance group, which rehearsed in a community hall on a council estate in Lambeth. The group had originally been Peruvian in dance focus and membership, but had expanded and, when I visited them, included people of Colombian, Bolivian, and Ecuadorian origin (see the flyer for their performance ‘**The Inca Empire Show,**’ Figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1 Flyer 'El Imperio de los Incas Show'⁴¹

From what I observed, the dance group was largely premised on teaching traditional dances and giving classes on the Inca civilisation, to both parents and children, in order to encourage and maintain ethnic pride and fraternity. Following a visit to one of their rehearsals and at Belén's request, I wrote a short text on their group to be used for advertising their activities. The family held anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist political views and took part in events supporting left-leaning politicians such as Rafael Correa and Ollanta Humala (respectively the presidents of Ecuador and Peru). Belén, like Euclides, was committed to the campaign for ethnic recognition (cf. Section 2.3.2) and to women's rights. In 2011, her (round robin) wishes for International Women's Day read:

Woman.....

This is a very special greeting on our day. A homage of congratulation for this great and noble task of being selfless mothers, dedicated wives, a true friend, admired

⁴¹ Translation: "Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Colombia united by a Latin American feeling."

professionals, and above all tireless fighters against machismo and [for] the equality of responsibilities and rights at home and in society.

Fraternally

Belén & Family

Data extract 3.E Email from Belén (08/03/11)

In her 40s, Belén was thinking of doing an MA in Education to advance her career opportunities and was planning to eventually return to Peru to accept a position with more responsibility. Mandana was considering practising Medicine in the UK and Peru. Belén and Mandana always addressed me in Spanish, although during our lengthy interview, Mandana occasionally used some English words; I heard Belén's son, Javier (aged 8), speak practically only in English.

3.6 A detour into social media

| OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION – SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES | |
|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD | |
| DIGITAL PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Browsing of public personal profiles on Hi5 and bebo - Setting up a research personal profile on Facebook - Browsing of private personal profiles and public diasporic groups on Facebook - Joining London Latino groups on Facebook |
| AUDIO RECORDING | - Discussion with Monika and Bibiana on Facebook, at their home (65') |
| COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND ARTEFACTS | - Screenshots of public personal profiles and diasporic groups |

Table 3.8 Overview of data collection – Social networking sites

As explained in 3.2.3, one of the original foci of investigation was the use of New Media, and in particular social networking sites (SNSs), by young people of Latin American descent. Since the widespread use of computer-mediated communication has created “new possibilities for linking dispersed peoples to their homeland and to others in the diaspora” (Hiller & Franz 2004:733), of particular interest was how young people negotiated and performed ethnolinguistic membership online. I had become interested in participation in digital diasporic networks and in semiotic representations of *latinidad* in the very early days of my research, when fieldwork was still essentially digital, in other words, when it consisted of browsing the internet for ‘Latino’ events and people in London. Thus, I came across the public profile pages of young people of Latin American descent living in London, which displayed mixing of English and Spanish and nationalistic imagery and discourse (e.g. Colombian flags). However, given the ethnographic nature of my project, I intended to be able to develop relationships with the owners of the profile pages that I would investigate. This proved to be fraught with difficulties. At Southside College, participants all talked

about having profile pages on various SNSs, such as Hi5, bebo, and Facebook, but, as described in 3.3.3, I was unable to pursue contact with them. At ELA, the only girl whom I knew to have profile pages left in July 2009 and the remaining girls, aged 11-12, told me that they were not interested in SNSs. Thereafter, I found out that Ángela's daughters had profiles on Facebook so I set up a research profile, giving a brief description of my study in Spanish ("**I am doing a research project on Latin American young people in London**"), and using my field name (Sofía). To maintain traceability and accountability, I registered it under my surname and provided the university email address given on printed information sheets about the project. At the same time, following conversation with Monika, I set up a group page for the school, whose aim was "Networking for [the school's] tenth anniversary reunion." The twin purposes of the group page were: (a) to create a database of alumni who could then be contacted by the school to participate in assemblies, for instance, and in the possible tenth anniversary celebrations and (b) to enable me to access potential participants and their profile pages. Euclides expressed enthusiasm about the project but never seemed to have the inclination or the time to become involved in the running of the page. Nor did Ángela's daughters invite former ELA students to the group page, so the alumni group never took off. Consequently I shifted my attention away from personal profiles and onto diasporic groups.

By being 'Facebook friends' with Ángela's daughters, I was able to see that they were members of diasporic groups specifically related to Colombia. Two were related to family networks, one to ethnic identification ('Yes I'm from Colombia and NO, I'm not a drug-dealer u fucking ignorant'), and another to social justice. In addition they were connected to groups that indexed ethnic solidarity with UK- or London-based Latin American enterprises or people, including support for London/Colombian student Tara ('Tara Hoyos-Martinez for Miss Universe GB 2010!'). This particular group does form part of the data analysed in Chapter 6 (Section 6.2). One noteworthy group, found under Yesika's 'Information,' was called 'You know you are a Latino in London if...'.⁴² Its aim was to compile amusing instances of shared knowledge (e.g., "elefant or seven sisters means suttin to u" – a reference to the two areas in London where the Latin American presence is most visible) and experiential landmarks (e.g., "uve bin to a club in central London were [sic] they play latin music... and u get pissd off when u c los blanquitos [slightly derogatory term for 'White people'] dancing salsa steps to reggaeton tunes").⁴³ Some of the page descriptors made explicit reference to transnational childhoods: for e.g. "Your parents suddenly stopped

⁴² See Appendix C for a screenshot of the home page of the Facebook group 'You know you are a Latino in London if...'

⁴³ Retrieved 04/02/10 from

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=5421d17e05a279821dda3a1a97de4ac9&gid=9233776793>

hitting you with “La Correa” [the belt] or “La Chancleta” [the flip flop] as soon as you moved to England!” This group was particularly interesting because it framed ethnic identification within geographical and temporal contexts (Latin America and London in the 1990s – 2000s) and anchored it in multiethnic practices. As it provided snippets of representations of *latinidad* in London, I sought to contextualise these within the experience of my participants. Two of Ángela’s daughters, Monika and Bibiana, agreed to be recorded while they looked at the page and made comments. Using the Facebook group page as a platform for discussion enhanced my ethnographic understanding of some of their cultural frames of reference (for instance, I refer to their comments on stereotypes about Ecuadorians in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.2). Thus, this type of activity enabled me to become more and more reflectively aware of the frames of interpretation of those I observed, and of my own culturally learned frames of interpretation (Erickson 1986:140).

3.7 A passage to Colombia

| OVERVIEW OF DATA COLLECTION – COLOMBIA | |
|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| METHOD | |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | - Conversations with various people, mainly on the Caribbean coast, in Bogotá, and in Neiva. |
| COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND ARTEFACTS | - Book: <i>Sin Tetras No Hay Paraíso</i> - Photographs of Colombia |

Table 3.9 Overview of data collection – Colombia

After I had helped her secure a visa from the Canadian Immigration Services and we had become friends, ELA teacher María invited me to her wedding, which was to take place in her home-town of Neiva, in the south-eastern part of Colombia. When I announced this to my supervisors, they reacted very negatively, evoking a possible kidnap and ransom scenario (Fieldnotes 26/11/09); such a disapproving response was a further illustration of the stereotyped associations of Colombia (and Latin America) with danger and criminality (cf. Sections 1.1.3, 3.5.1, 4.3.2, 6.2.2). A year later, I spent a total of twenty-four days and nights in Colombia; fourteen of which were spent staying with people (or their friends and relatives) who had either taught or volunteered at ELA, while the remaining ten days involved backpacking. Notwithstanding the torrential rains that had been ravaging the country for weeks, causing floods and landslides, and general devastation, my experience of Colombia was that it was a very safe travelling destination. Although I did talk with people from different walks of life (such as unskilled workers and graduates), I was mostly surrounded by members of lower-middle or middle-class families, who could afford a vehicle, foreign travel, or, at least, to live in decent accommodation.

This trip was valuable for three reasons. Firstly, it enabled me to develop a deeper understanding of aspects of life in Colombia (and hence of the possible context for migration), where the dirty war between the military, the paramilitaries, and the guerrillas is something that binds many Colombians together, be it through forced displacement, migration, or death. During this trip, three of the people with whom I stayed, and had met through ELA, disclosed that they had close relatives who had been kidnapped and/or murdered, either by the revolutionary guerrilla group FARC or during the drug-related violence in the early 1990s. The matter-of-factness of these revelations, combined with frequent news items related to (contemporary or past) fatal attacks on civilians by armed groups, conveyed the relative normality of violent death in this country. In addition, although there have undoubtedly been significant advances in social and economic development in recent years (cf. Londoño de la Cuesta 1997; OECD 2010), Colombia still has to contend with extreme poverty and gender inequality (OECD 2008:13). A photograph I took whilst visiting a cemetery with a friend aims to capture the persistent and sizeable disparities of wealth, as well as the prominence of death in Colombian social history (see Plate 3.2).



Plate 3.2 Two tombstones in Teruel, Colombia

Secondly, this trip to Colombia provided an opportunity to pursue a topic that had been prominent in the conversations held with female participants in London – that of plastic

surgery among Colombians. Prior to starting fieldwork, I had come across articles about Colombia being a popular destination for “scalpel tourism” and about the Colombian television series *Sin Tetas No Hay Paraíso* (Without Tits There Is No Paradise) in the Spanish press.⁴⁴ The story of *Sin Tetas No Hay Paraíso* describes the ultimately tragic vicissitudes of five teenage girls from a deprived neighbourhood of Pereira, a town in the *Eje Cafetero* region of Colombia (cf. Section 6.6.2). Failing at school and with few opportunities ahead of them, the girls decide that the only way to support their families and to have access to an expensive lifestyle is to sell their sexual services to the local *traquetos* (drug traffickers); to achieve this, the main character, aged 14, resolves at all cost to find the money to pay for breast augmentation. This series subsequently came up in conversations with some Colombian participants from ELA and Southside College. Once in Colombia, I read the novel *Sin Tetas No Hay Paraíso* and mentioned it to people I met; this usually served as a trigger for conversations about plastic surgery and Colombian femininities. The data obtained in Colombia echoed the accounts I had heard in London; these are analysed in depth in Chapter 6 (Sections 6.4, 6.6).

Thirdly, travelling to Colombia had a positive impact on field relations. In the months before travelling, Colombian members of the school seemed pleased that I was visiting their country; my trip seemed to represent a significant step in my attempts to understand their migratory experience. When I made a brief return visit to ELA after coming back from Colombia, Euclides welcomed me by “calling me *colombiana-francesa-inglesa* [Colombian-French-English] (or some permutation), saying that I was now part Colombian (following my trip)” (Fieldnotes 15/01/11). This inclusive description underscored the level of acceptance gained as a result of sustained ethnographic engagement in the field.

3.9 Exit and end-point

3.9.1 Overview of sample

The overall sample was predominantly migrant, female, and Colombian.

All the adult participants had migrated, in adulthood, from a Spanish-speaking Latin American country, apart from one: Silvia, 26, of Colombian parents (see Section 6.4). Like the majority of students (aged 3 to 13) at ELA, Silvia was born and raised in the UK and would classify as second generation. The remaining eight young women (aged 16 to 20) belonged to the 1.5 generation. Those who had attended ELA had arrived in London aged 10

⁴⁴ On Colombia as a destination for affordable cosmetic surgery, see Spanish newspaper *El Mundo* 02/08 and 28/10/05. On *Sin Tetas No Hay Paraíso*, see Naím 2008.

or younger (Monika, Yesika, Bibiana, Mandana), while those who had not had arrived aged 13 to 16 (Liliana, Tatiana, Rosario, Cinthya). All these young women were in education (FE, sixth-form, university).

During fieldwork, most of the people whom I met and spoke to (either during informal conversations or recorded interviews) were female and Colombian. For instance, out of the 34 people who were recorded (both interviews and home recordings), 27 were female and 19 were Colombian (or, for Silvia, of Colombian descent). This was not by design but rather as a consequence of snowball sampling and of several other circumstantial reasons. Firstly, the demographics of ELA were such that most of the ELA staff were women (84%) and Colombian (73%) (cf. Table 3.4). Secondly, in all three key informant families, the women happened to have daughters who were in secondary or higher education, and either no sons or sons who were in primary education. Consequently, it was the female members (mothers, daughters, and niece) whom I got to know best, because they corresponded to the age bracket I was interested in (adolescents / adults), and either worked or attended ELA. Thirdly, the majority of current ELA students who could be categorised as teen or pre-teen were girls. More generally, the over-representation of Colombians in the sample reflects both the higher proportion of Colombians within the Spanish-speaking Latino population in London (cf. McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011:7), and their greater involvement in Latin American community organisations, as mentioned earlier (cf. Section 3.3.1). Finally, fieldwork also developed in a largely feminine environment because the sectors in which many participants had been or were involved in are mainly staffed by women (i.e. language teaching, nursery education, and women's rights support).

3.9.2 Overview of data collection

Having accumulated a fair amount of data (and indeed “[i]t is in the sheer volume of data that researchers also gain security,” Delamont 2002:66), it was necessary to withdraw from the field. This entailed both “physical removal from the field and emotional disengagement from the relationships established there” (Brewer 2000:100). I staggered my withdrawal from ELA by not attending systematically every Saturday and then by returning for briefer appearances, which had a precise research focus (for instance, ask a member of staff to clarify a statement made previously, cf. Section 5.3.2). Throughout this gradual pulling out of the field, it was necessary to reiterate to ELA staff the primacy of report writing, which meant that I would not be able to continue assisting them in or outside the classroom.

The majority of data were obtained through participant observation and audio recordings, which are summarised in Table 3.10. However the overall data collected were more

multimodal, as they also included media images (e.g. Figure 6.1), screenshots of web pages (e.g. Figure 4.1), emails (e.g. Data extract 6.L), text messages (e.g. Data extract 3.D), digital photographs (e.g. Plate 1.1), and artefacts such as ELA school documents (e.g. Data extract 5.D) and newspaper articles (e.g. Data extract 6.A).

| METHOD | FIELDSITE | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | ELA OR INVOLVING ELA PARTICIPANTS | |
| AUDIO RECORDINGS | 16 interviews 5 home recordings | = 15h 46min = 2h 02min |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | 67 events (2009-2011) including 46 visits to ELA | ≈ 255 hours at ELA |
| | SOUTHSIDE COLLEGE | |
| AUDIO RECORDINGS | 4 interviews | = 3h 16min |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | 2 events (2009) | |
| | LONDON | |
| AUDIO RECORDINGS | 5 interviews | = 4h 03min |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | 14 main events (2008-2011). Those hitherto not cited are: - visit to Cuming Museum’s exhibition ‘ <i>Carnaval del Pueblo</i> : The story’, in Walworth - visit to <i>Carnaval del Pueblo</i> , in Walworth - <i>Sueños</i> , showing <i>Jóvenes sin Fronteras</i> (a documentary on London Latino youth) and performances by Latin American artists, at Peckham library - conference on Latin American identity, organised by the activist group <i>Coordinadora Latinoamericana</i> , at SOAS - screening of Latin American Youth Forum shorts at BFI - roundtable ‘Representing, responding to and researching the Latin American/ Ibero-American community in London,’ organised by a PhD student, at IOE - Launch of <i>No Longer Invisible</i> , at City Hall - LAWRS dinner for volunteers, at Spanish restaurant <i>Nueva Costa Dorada</i> , in the West End and an unquantifiable number of conversations with people | |
| | COLOMBIA | |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | Unquantifiable number of conversations = 1 set of fieldnotes on Colombia (2010) | |
| TOTALS | | |
| AUDIO RECORDINGS | = 34 people recorded = 27 females; 7 males | = 25 interviews and 5 home recordings = 25h 10min of recordings |
| PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION | = 84 main participant-observation events between October 2008 and July 2011 | |
| GRAND TOTAL | = 114 events (participant-observation and recordings) ≈ 148,000 words of fieldnotes | |

Table 3.10 Overview of data collection (participant-observation and audio recordings)⁴⁵

⁴⁵ IOE: Institute of Education, and SOAS: School of African and Oriental Studies, both part of the University of London; BFI: British Film Institute.

3.9.3 Positionality

Our ability to learn ethnographically is an extension of what every human being must do, that is, learn the meanings, norms, patterns of a way of life. From a narrow view of science, this fact must be thought unfortunate. True objectivity may be thought to be undermined. But there is no way to avoid the fact that the ethnographer himself or herself is a factor in the inquiry. ... The particular characteristics of the ethnographer are themselves an instrument of the inquiry, for both good and bad. For good, it is important to stress, because the age, sex, race or talents of the ethnographer may make some knowledge accessible that would be difficult of access to another. For bad, as we all recognize, because of partiality. (Hymes 1996:13)

In this section, I want to draw attention to how the ways in which I was positioned may have shaped the kind of data I obtained, and how some “some particular characteristics” made “some knowledge accessible that would be difficult of access to another.” Firstly, I positioned myself and was perceived as a *HE student* and a *schoolteacher* – positions which seemed to make more sense than that of *researcher* to many participants. This would have been significant since, as a social category is assigned to the ethnographer by the group members, their expectations of what the ethnographer wants to learn and – and their decisions about what should be told – will derive partly from their sense of who he or she is (Agar 1996:91). The categories of schoolteacher and HE student are both strongly associated with the educational establishment: the teacher as someone who evaluates academic achievement, and the HE student as someone who has achieved a certain level of academic success. Thus, this positioning may have created a bias, first in the *type of participants* with whom I developed rapport, and second in the *discursive representations* I was exposed to. It is, however, very difficult to ascertain the extent of this, given the participant-observer paradox described by Duranti (cf. Section 3.2.1); nevertheless this acknowledgment is an important step in contextualising the stance of participants who aligned with dominant educational discourses, such as those who favoured normative views of language use, engagement with learning, and high academic ambitions (cf. Sections 5.3.2, 6.4, and 6.6.3).

Secondly, whereas all participants saw me as a student interested in Latin Americans, some also saw me as a fellow, approachable woman with whom they had some affinity (cf. Sections 3.3, 3.5). Consequently, although the initial focus of this study was on language practices, many conversations veered off language and into more intimate discussions and disclosures about weight, appearance, and femininity in general. These gendered accounts emerged ethnographically while talking about their migratory trajectory (e.g. “How are you finding London?”, “What was secondary school like?”, “How was your trip to Colombia?”), rather than as a consequence of an explicit focus on femininities. As a result, a significant proportion of the data I collected related to how Latinas, both in London and in Latin America, were reported to look and behave, and what they were deemed to value. This was

tied to the fact that fieldwork developed in a largely feminine environment (cf. Sections 3.4.1, 3.4.2, 3.5), but, I argue, was also contingent on rapport and shared womanhood. A male researcher, especially an older one, would have been far less likely to collect similar data. Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that a “distinct advantage of female ethnographers is that they push the research agenda toward certain issues glossed by male counterparts, which include gender issues” (Brewer 2000:100). Moreover, the kind of woman I was perceived to be was, as some Colombian participants described it, one with a “natural style,” in other words, with few artificial enhancements (e.g. heels, make-up). This is important to bear in mind given the representations of beautification practices that came up during fieldwork (cf. Section 6.4).

Therefore, these data need to be contextualised within interactions partly shaped by the researcher speaking from the position of (a) someone interested in Latin Americans, (b) a HE student, (c) a schoolteacher, and (d) a ‘natural’ woman. In other words, these accounts may have been voiced differently had informants been talking to, for instance, a Latin American friend, a male researcher, or while their mother was present. To conclude, it is useful to underline that the data described in this study occurred as a result of *situated* processes. They came about in exchanges that were contingent on contextual parameters (e.g., where the conversation was taking place, with whom, following what topic). These exchanges were in effect co-constructed with the researcher, given that they relied on the degree to which the speaker perceived there to be shared experience (e.g. teaching) and/or ideology (e.g. a pro-education stance), and the extent to which the researcher aligned interactionally with the speaker.

3.10 Data processing

3.10.1 Data filtering

The very nature of ethnographic research involves collecting more data than one can do justice to in one study. Consequently it entails making informed decisions about which data to prioritise, in order to make the dataset more manageable. I decided not to pursue or use radio-microphone recordings of adolescents, family home recordings, and SNS data for ethical and pragmatic reasons.

Whilst teaching Euclides’ group, I had developed rapport with some of the female students, particularly one whom I helped prepare for her GCSE examination that summer. My plan had been to ask them, during the following autumn term, to carry a radio-microphone, in order to record spontaneous interactions between them and other youngsters,

as well as with adults. This method has been a cornerstone of linguistic ethnographies taking place in school environments (cf. Rampton 2005, 2006), including complementary schools (cf. Blackledge and Creese 2010). However, this was made impossible by the discontinuity in their attendance: most girls did not come back in September; among the three who remained, one suddenly left for Colombia, while the other two attended classes sporadically. As a result of my ethnographic stance, I decided to concentrate on the members of the school whom I saw regularly and for whom, by that point, I had become an established presence in the school: the staff and the parents.

With regards to home recordings, I chose not to ask Euclides and Fernanda to contribute any – contrary to what I had initially planned – because of ethical considerations: Fernanda fell seriously ill and it would have been intrusive and insensitive to do so. In addition, the home recordings I did obtain from the other key informant families were of poor quality: the sound of sizzling meat, background music, and multiple voices overlapping each other made them difficult to use. At best, they provided useful contextual information about key informants. Similarly, I decided not to pursue the question of personal profiles on Facebook. At the time when I was planning to collect and use SNS data facilitated by Ángela's daughters, their family was undergoing personal turmoil. In doing fieldwork, one is always faced with a wide range of possible choices, but we always have a responsibility to safeguard the rights, interests, and even sensitivities of our informants (Spradley 1979). After careful deliberation, I deemed that it would have been inconsiderate to be insistent about being put in touch with former ELA students (cf. Section 3.6) during this trying time. I also discarded using the profile pages of Ángela's daughters as data because it would have been unethical: indeed, the nature of their family problems meant that doing so could have jeopardised their anonymity and entailed a breach of trust.

3.10.2 Transcription, translation, and fieldnotes

A digital recorder (Zoom H2) was used for audio recordings. Each recording was accompanied by fieldnotes which described the encounter (e.g., location, date/time, participants) and provided additional information that was not conveyed audibly (such as an explanatory gesture made by a speaker). I then transcribed these recordings personally, which was a demanding but crucial process to gain intimate knowledge of the recorded data. Having transcribed an interview once was not sufficient: it was necessary to review transcriptions to rectify mistakes and re-consider previous choices, since “there is no final transcription, only different, revised versions of a transcript for a particular purpose, for a particular audience” (Duranti 1997:161). Indeed, it can be argued that “there is no perfect

transcript in the sense of a transcript that can fully recapture the total experience of being in the original situation” (ibid.). Listening again to the data was also important because recall of *what* had been said, and *how* it had been said (e.g., with amusement or exasperation), was not always reliable. On the question of deceptive recollections, Agar makes the useful observation that:

The problem is that long-term memory recall often produces distorted results. And the distortion is not random, but rather alters in a direction away from the details of the specific event and towards the more general stereotypical conceptualisation of the event. (Agar 1996:162)

In addition, it was important to “be critically aware of the theoretical, political, and ethical implications of [my] transcription process and the final products resulting from it” (Duranti 1997:161). For instance, I made the decision to transcribe colloquial renditions of frequently-used words (e.g., ‘cos’ for ‘because’), as this most faithfully represented the way both interviewees and interviewer spoke. For this same reason I decided to keep grammatical inaccuracies, because not to do so would have been an act of ‘linguistic cleansing’, which would not have added to the analysis and which, on the contrary, would have distorted the voice of the speaker.

A transcription is always partial partly because it is an inadequate record of all paralinguistic aspects of the interaction and also because judgements are made about which verbal utterances to turn into text, and how to do it (Mason 2002:77). In this study, the sign * indicates that I made the sound [uh hm] while the interviewee was speaking. I have chosen to include this because the sound [uh hm] played a part in the interaction: it could signal agreement, encouragement, or simply active listening. While it is impossible to specify, retrospectively, which of these meanings was expressed in the sound [uh hm], I argue that the transcription of this paralinguistic element contributes to a more complete rendition of the exchange.

The transcription conventions used in this study are as follows:

| | |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>ella</i> | Utterance made in Spanish |
| but | Utterance originally made in Spanish and translated into English |
| she | Utterance made in English |
| <u>now</u> | Stressed utterance |
| [belt] | Added information to ease understanding |
| (1.0) | Timed pause |
| () | Incomprehensible utterance |
| (tap) | Likely interpretation |
| = | Latching |
| [| Overlapping talk |
| ((laugh)) | Additional verbal behaviour |
| * | Interviewer making sound [uh hm] |

| | |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| ... | Passage removed |
| 23'12 | Time at which the extract starts or finishes in the interview |

Table 3.11 Transcription conventions

On the left hand side, transcriptions of longer passages include an indication of where the passage took place in the interview: for example, 02'18 would mean that the extract came from the very beginning, two minutes and eighteen seconds into the interview. This is an additional way of contextualising the data.

I did not systematically translate data recorded in Spanish; instead I made sure that I understood the transcriptions that I produced and only translated the passages that I wanted to incorporate in the thesis. Translating implies an understanding not only of the immediate context but also of more general assumptions, such as people's world view, including the use of language with social action (Duranti 1997:154). Ideally I would have wanted to include, systematically, the original speech in Spanish before giving my translation, so as to make the process of translating more visible and accountable but, for questions of readability, extended original Spanish quotations are instead included in Appendix D. In the case of shorter extracts (where the translation is straightforward), I deemed it preferable to only provide my translation, but to indicate that the utterance was originally spoken in Spanish by using a bold font:

Liliana loved "**Colombian clothes**", and would only buy Colombian jeans.
(Interview 13/03/09).

In the case of utterances that I could not comprehend (either phonetically or semantically) or that I was unsure of, I sought the help of participants, all the while preserving the anonymity of interviewees. The cases where help was most required concerned the interviews with participants I had only met once or twice. In particular, the young people from Southside College, having been brought up in Latin America, were more likely to use vernacular forms that I was unfamiliar with. In these cases, it was invaluable to be able to discuss these utterances with participants who had migrated from the same country fairly recently. This was a way of understanding local meanings, which is crucial to understanding what is going on (Dewalt & Dewalt 2002:49). Throughout fieldwork, I engaged in a frequent dialogue with participants about the contextual meaning of certain words and phrases, and the best way to understand and translate them into English.

During participant-observation, I kept brief notes, sometimes only writing key words as reminders, but always transcribing utterances that seemed interesting or pertinent. I kept a system to indicate whether my transcription was verbatim or an approximate rendition. If the occasion allowed it, I would sit down away from people to summarise the chronology of the

day and to add further comments on what I had seen. Then at home, I typed detailed fieldnotes, which, after a five or six-hour day at ELA, could be a lengthy and painstaking task. It was necessary to record these events (especially the prolonged ones) the same day or the following day, as recall of events deteriorated very quickly. Indeed, Brewer observes that

Ethnographic work is exhausting and the fieldworker will be tempted to postpone typing the days' hieroglyphics each night. Memory fades quickly however, and unrecorded information will soon be overshadowed by subsequent events. Too long a delay sacrifices the rich immediacy of concurrent notes. (Brewer 2000:88)

Like transcription, this process could be onerous but was always valuable because it facilitated intense familiarity with the data; typing fieldnotes provided an opportunity to reflect on events and to make notes about possible patterns, links to the literature, and questions to investigate during future visits. Thus, fieldnotes are simultaneously data and analysis; they are a construction of the ethnographer and are part of the process of analysis (Dewalt & Dewalt 2002:143), although it is important to distinguish between "substantive fieldnotes (what is seen and heard)" and "analytic fieldnotes (one's interpretation)" (Brewer 2000:88). In total I compiled close to 150,000 words of fieldnotes.

3.10.3 Narrowing the focus

I trialled and considered using a programme such as NVivo to analyse these data but eventually decided not to, because I preferred re-reading and annotating hard rather than electronic copies. This amounted to a less efficient way of managing data, but it did not prevent me from using electronic functions, such as searching for the incidence of particular terms. The aim was to become very familiar with the data, by reading and listening to it again and again, in order to find out whether:

any interesting patterns can be identified; whether anything stands out as surprising or puzzling; how the data relate to one might have expected on the basis of common-sense knowledge, official accounts, or previous theory; and whether there are any apparent inconsistencies or contradictions among the views of different groups or individuals, or between people's expressed beliefs or attitudes and what they do. (Hammersley & Atkinson 1983:210)

As I went through fieldnotes, transcripts, school documents, and collected artefacts, I noticed the recurrence of some topics. These recurrent topics are prime candidates for categories to code the information in the data, which requires going through the data again and marking which sections fit the new category (Agar 1996:153). Thus, cross-sectional indexing of the dataset was done by applying a uniform set of coding categories

systematically and consistently to the data (Mason 2002). These categories were selected by cross-referencing the areas of interest that had emerged from the reading of the literature with the patterns identified in the data. As a result the coding categories corresponded to theoretical issues that had been identified as relevant – e.g., ethnopolitics – as well as themes that surfaced after close examination – e.g., teenage mothers (cf. Appendix B for a full list of coding categories).

Ethnography begins with the general problem: What are the cultural means people are using to organise and interpret their experience? (Spradley 1979:93). In this study, the initial focus was on language and how it served both as a means to organise experience and as a basis for group membership. The main fieldsite ELA functioned as a location for gaining access to families and to community representations, but was not the sole object of the research. Hence fieldwork also took place in other settings and included community events, interviews with students at an FE college, and informal conversations with a range of people in London and Colombia. The decision to focus on ELA and on female participants at and beyond ELA was motivated by the amount of time spent, and the extent to which rapport had been built, at this location and with these participants. Consequently, I wanted to develop a deeper understanding of (a) ELA – i.e. its discourse, its roles, its people – and (b) female participants – i.e. their discourse, their experiences, their preoccupations. At ELA, the recurrent question of funding and the unexpected presence of non-Latin Americans led me to investigate how the school was represented in official texts. In addition, spending time at the school entailed being exposed to different language practices and to divergent, moralising discourses regarding the use of Spanish and English. With the female participants, principally young women who had migrated as children or teenagers, the question of how Latinas looked, behaved, and engaged with schooling, came up again and again in conversation; this prompted me to investigate further questions of the feminine aesthetic in Colombia and in the UK. As other ethnographic researchers have found, attending to the issues that stand out in conversations with participants provides valuable avenues for research. For instance, Hirsch (2007:452) acknowledges that she only turned her attention to generational change after being told repeatedly and by many women that their lives were different from their mothers'. Consequently she highlights the importance of flexibility in research strategy and observes that

Those embarking on migration studies may want to remember that migrants can offer much more than just grist for an academic's mill, if one listens carefully, one can find in their words important directions about the theoretical and methodological approaches that best suits the problem at hand. (Hirsch 2007:452)

In this way, three areas emerged as most salient: (a) how a Latin American school chooses to represent its community in official texts, in other words, the issue of who the school is for and how it fits into a broader context; (b) the position of staff and families on language choice and proficiency in Latin American families; and (c) how women at and beyond the school represent other Latinas in their discourse. By engaging simultaneously with the literature and the coded data, I was able to formulate the following research questions that guide the analysis in the next three empirical chapters:

- a) How does the ethno-political context in which Latin American school ELA operates inform the ways in which it represents its purpose and target community?
- b) How do language ideologies inform the ways in which Latino families are represented at Latin American school ELA?
- c) How do gendered, ethnicising, and stratifying discourses inform the ways in which Latinas are represented among young Latinas from the 1.5 generation?

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter marked the transition from reading to interacting, moving from an engagement mediated by written texts to one realised through encounters, networking, and negotiations. It gave an account of the methodological and empirical journey that was fieldwork, partly fashioned by (a) the “student-child-apprentice learning role of ethnographer” (Agar 1996:242), (b) variable rapport and power relations with gate-keepers and informants, and (c) the unpredictability of the field. Indeed, the unexpected nature of ethnographic enquiry necessitates adaptability in research design and the ability to “[be] open to discovering meanings and patterns of behaviour not foreseen” (Hymes 1996:14). This, in turn, points to the value of assessing the appropriateness of methods whilst being in the field, in other words, of treating methodology contextually. Overall, a reflexive stance is necessary to acknowledge and document issues relating to fluctuation in research design, as well as tensions between involvement and distance, bias, and positionality. At the same time, many or most of the frustrations and failures of fieldwork will tend to be smoothed out by the transformative process of report writing, which can attribute retrospective coherence to events that were haphazard, and shape the reader’s response to events and to people.

The aim of this chapter was to provide an ‘epistemological warrant’ for the data collected and analysed in this thesis. I have sought to achieve this by demonstrating that proficiency in Spanish, sustained and varied engagement in the field, reciprocity, and being an approachable woman were all factors in creating the necessary conditions for trust and

rapport to develop. This is perhaps best encapsulated in the words of Claudia, who, after recruiting me for the new mentoring scheme at LAWRS, suggested that I attend the women's reading group, writing: **"Only Latin American women are attending, so I asked permission to invite you and they said yes, anyway you speak perfect Spanish and you (share) a lot of things with us"** (private email 10/01/11).⁴⁶ As a result, I contend that I was able to attend to the discursive attempts of participants to make sense of their world and their migratory experiences, and thus am in a legitimate position to strive to represent their perspectives, whilst acknowledging that processes such as note-taking, transcription, translation, and analysis all distort fleeting, context-specific interactions. It is also important to grasp the "highly situated nature of ethnographic description," which is dependent on "this ethnographer, in this time, in this place, with these informants, these commitments, and these experiences" (Geertz 1988:5). Finally, while this study cannot make authoritative, wide-ranging generalisations about Latin Americans in London, it *can* make empirical and theoretical claims that hold true for this particular dataset, and which, by extension, can contribute to a deeper understanding of aspects of life in a global city.

In the following chapter, I shift my focus from methodological issues to data analysis, by looking at how ELA represented the Latin American community, as well as the school's purpose and remit, in official and public texts.

⁴⁶ Original extract in Spanish: '*Sólo asisten mujeres latinas, así que solicité aceptación para invitarte y me dijeron que sí, igual vos hablas perfecto español y compartís muchas cosas con nosotras*'.

Chapter 4 – “Latin Americans mainly but open to all”: Ethnopolitics and official representations of Latin American school ELA

4.1 Introduction

Having described and discussed fieldwork in Chapter 3, I now turn to the data that were collected and the discussions that follow from these data. The focus in this chapter is on ELA in representational terms. It seeks to address the following research question: How does the ethnopolitical context in which ELA operates inform the ways in which it represents its purpose and target community? This chapter therefore needs to be framed within the ethnopolitical context described in Section 2.3.2 and the language ideologies described in Section 2.4. More specifically, it is an exemplification of how the language ideological discourse outlined in Section 2.4.3 (“It is important that the children of migrants know how to speak their mother tongue, because it forms an important part of their heritage”) plays out in the case of a complementary school in London. This chapter argues that ELA draws on (a) the negative image of the Latin American community in London as a deprived group associated with criminality, and at risk of underachievement (cf. Sections 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 2.3.3), and (b) the desirability of Latin American heritage (cf. Section 1.2.3), and is able to turn these discourses to its advantage in a competitive ethnopolitical context. The representations in this chapter can also be seen as a manifestation of community efforts to obtain more visibility and more recognition, in strategic, social, and economic terms (cf. Sections 1.2.2, 2.3.2).

The chapter starts by contextualising the issues at stake: it begins by discussing the different functions and benefits that have been attributed to complementary schools (Section 4.2.1), before considering what the implications are for how they are funded (Section 4.2.2). Some brief but necessary ethnographic information about ELA’s economic situation is also provided. From there, it analyses discursive representations of ELA in three contexts: on the Charity Commission website, on the Local Authority website, and in an article by think-tank Civitas (Section 4.3). It is argued that, as part of its legitimising strategies, ELA presented itself as an ethnic minority charity, a Latin American community project, and a language school open to all communities (Section 4.4). Thus, it mobilised its association with Black and ethnic minorities in general, with the Latin American community in particular, and with

a prized form of linguistic capital, Spanish, to maximise its appeal to funders and service users.

4.2 Purpose and funding of complementary schools

4.2.1 Purpose

Government-funded learning charity ContinYou states that there are “6,000 to 8,000 supplementary schools in Britain” (ContinYou November 2009). Called ‘heritage schools’ in the USA, complementary schools are also known as ‘supplementary’, ‘community’, or ‘Saturday’ schools in the UK. The early literature, notably that on schools providing for Black students (cf. Dacosta 1987; Dove 1993), favoured the term ‘supplementary schools,’ while some more recent studies have adopted the label ‘complementary schools,’ to highlight the value of the schools’ contribution to children’s education. Thus, Creese et al. justify their choice in the following manner:

We use the term complementary school to acknowledge the work these schools do to complement the education of the young people attending them in relation to statutory education. We prefer the term ‘complementary’ to ‘supplementary’ which we argue carries a ‘deficit’ connotation of educational failure. (Creese et al. 2009:350)

This thesis opts for the term ‘complementary schools’ to align with the current literature that deals with ethnolinguistic schools, which focus on teaching language and cultural/historical heritage (e.g. Blackledge & Creese 2010; Çavuşoğlu 2010; Creese et al. 2006, 2009; Francis et al. 2008, 2009; Martin et al. 2006).

The question of how to name these schools is not purely academic: imbued with qualitatively different meanings, the names reflect how the schools’ purpose is conceptualised and, as a result, how their worth is assessed. For instance, in a talk entitled ‘Every child matters, narrowing the gaps and supplementary schools,’ a civil servant from the then DCSF distinguished between ‘complementary’ schools that reinforced the compulsory curriculum (by supporting literacy and numeracy for example) and were by implication valuable, and ‘supplementary’ schools, which, by dint of simply adding to the curriculum, were not as beneficial (Fieldnotes 16/06/09).⁴⁷ The perceived congruence of complementary schools with government agendas (see Section 4.3.1) and with goals to redress minority underachievement (see Sections 2.3.2, 4.2, 4.4.1) is central to how such schools can claim legitimacy, as I demonstrate throughout this chapter.

⁴⁷ The civil servant was Michael Stark, who was giving a talk as part of the ESRC seminar series ‘Complementary Schools: Research, Policy and Practice,’ held at King’s College London on 16/06/09.

The National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRC) describes complementary schools as having “[normally] been set up by communities in response to a perceived need by parents or the community” (NRC, no date).⁴⁸ It is generally understood in the literature that these communities are ethnic minorities (Reay & Mirza 1997; Maylor et al. 2010) and that complementary schools cater for a determined community (e.g., Greek, Chinese). Maylor et al. (2010:27) declare that they “offer a wide range of out-of-school-hours educational provision for children and young people of *shared* ethnic, cultural or linguistic *heritage*” [my emphasis]. Indeed, many schools were set up in order to inculcate features deemed to be essential to a group identity, such as cultural practices and language (cf. the language ideological discourse outlined in Section 2.4.3). Such schools tend to define themselves in ethnolinguistic, religious, or national terms (e.g., Jewish, Bangladeshi) and are concerned with shaping young people’s identification through the maintenance of a corresponding heritage. The British Education Index defines their purpose as “[enabling] an individual to develop an increased knowledge of the religion or culture of *his/her ethnic group*, or to develop some *special skill*” [my emphasis] (in Strand 2007:2). This dual and possible contradictory role – ethnicity-centred or skill-centred – is explored in Section 4.4 and the tensions that may arise from it are examined in the next chapter (cf. Sections 5.3.4, 5.3.5). In addition, complementary schools do not only specialise in the instruction of a minority language, religion, or culture; they often provide generic academic support (e.g., help with mainstream homework, additional tuition in the core subjects, and preparation for national examinations such as GCSEs in languages).

Beyond the preservation of group heritage and assistance with schoolwork, the setting up of *Black* complementary schools in the 1960s needs to be situated within a context of institutional racism and seen as a reaction against the discriminatory treatment of Black students in mainstream schooling, where an Anglo-centred curriculum and low expectations ‘failed’ students. Some schools had a radical political agenda; indeed, in his study of Black supplementary schools in the 1980s, Dacosta concluded that

the central theme underpinning the ideology of the Black supplementary school movement is the resistance of the Afro-Caribbean community, through supplementary schooling in this instance, to accept incorporation as subordinate members of society and the hegemony of the dominant strata in British society. (Dacosta 1987:214)

⁴⁸ “The National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education (NRC) is the first national agency ever to campaign on behalf of supplementary education and works to raise the standards and profile of and to build support for complementary schools across England.” From the website of Our Languages, a consortium of four organisations that aim to “promote community languages in complementary and mainstream schools” (Our Languages, no date).

Describing them as “set up by and for the black community” (Mirza & Reay 2000:522), Reay & Mirza (1997:477) define complementary schools as “places of resistance to racism and for the struggle to succeed.” Like Hall et al. (2002), they present these schools as agents of social change which have transformative and empowering potential for ethnic minority children and communities. Consequently, Issa & Williams (2009) suggest three broad, non-mutually exclusive functions of complementary schools: (a) raise educational attainment, (b) maintain the cultural and/or language traditions of a particular community, and (c) provide instruction which runs distinctly counter to the values found in mainstream education. In sum, although complementary schools fulfil different roles, it can be said that most, if not all, aim to raise achievement through the development of skills, confidence, and/or community allegiance. This concern with improving academic results was not lost on Gordon Brown’s Labour government, which commissioned a report to look at the impact of complementary schools on attainment and scope the feasibility of conducting an extensive quantitative study on the subject (cf. Maylor et al. 2010).

Mirza & Reay (2000) and Archer & Francis (2006) argue that, thanks to complementary schools, parents and staff develop and magnify the children’s – and by extension the ethnic community’s – social and cultural capital:

The black women through their involvement in complementary schooling were producing resources to compensate for perceived deficits in state educational provision and thereby enhancing the black community’s stock of both social and cultural capital. (Mirza & Reay 2000:528)

[The Chinese supplementary] schools were valued for their capacity to generate *social and educational capital* that enabled families to promote their children’s educational achievement in mainstream schooling and the (future) workplace. [my emphasis] (Archer & Francis 2006:35)

In Chinese complementary schools, Francis et al. contend that language represents both social and cultural capital for the pupils, some of whom

might be seen to be utilising an ‘*ethnic capital*’ to benefit their saleability in the global labour market, interestingly refusing the discursive ‘Othering’ of their minority ethnic language as irrelevant in western culture and rather reinvesting this language skill as currency in the neo-liberal marketplace. [my emphasis] (Francis et al. 2009:527)⁴⁹

As outlined in Section 2.4.3, Bourdieu’s concept of capital is particularly relevant to complementary schooling because it captures the idea of individual or communal acquisition

⁴⁹ The italicised turns of phrase in Archer & Francis and Francis et al. reflect a wider tendency among scholars to isolate supposedly ‘new’ forms of capital (which are arguably forms of cultural capital), such as “erotic capital” (cf. Hakim 2010). In the literature reviewed here, Helga Nowotny’s concept of “emotional capital” is mentioned in Mirza & Reay (2000:528), while Archer & Francis (2006:42) speak of ““family capital.””

of relative advantage, be it by securing educational qualifications (institutionalised cultural capital), acquiring language skills (linguistic capital), and participating in / benefiting from support networks (social capital). Hence, establishing a relationship between complementary schools and the lack of and the pursuit of capital has been a fundamental strategy in discourses seeking to legitimate their purpose and, by extension, their eligibility for funding.

4.2.2 Funding

In a report on race equality and local education in Birmingham, Warren & Gillborn (2003:29) describe how African Caribbean and Refugee parents, in particular, “felt that they had to compensate for the failings of the education service” and “[pointed out] that the complementary school system was initiated by their communities in the 1960s because of the way the education service was failing their children”. The authors report how:

[i]t appeared to [the African Caribbean and Refugee parents] that while there were improvements, these were not nearly enough to redress the disadvantage faced by their children and their communities. (Warren & Gillborn 2003:29)

Other parents also drew attention to the hardship they faced as *communities*, and to the concomitant responsibility of the authorities to redress this:

Bangladeshi, Pakistani and Refugee parents made the point that as communities they experienced relatively high levels of poverty. They also recognised that despite the willingness of parents and communities to support their children’s learning, they did not always possess the necessary skills or proficiency in English to realise this desire. They therefore felt that the LEA [Local Education Authority] had a responsibility to support communities to meet this obligation. (ibid.)

What becomes clear in Warren & Gillborn’s findings is that complementary schools can be conceived of as a means to compensate for structural inequalities. At the same, as the latter part of the quotation suggests, they may be run by the very people not having the “necessary skills” or “proficiency in English” (cf. Section 2.4.2), and hence be suffering from this unjust distribution of economic, cultural and linguistic forms of capital. From this perspective, the authorities (“the LEA”) have a responsibility to support these schools. Yet Strand (2007:2) describes them as “non-profit-making organizations,” which “are frequently registered as charities, and often rely on enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers and on the generosity of funders to operate.” Moreover, Warren & Gillborn (2003: 46) mention the “insecure financial base of complementary schools,” as do a number of other studies (cf. Reay & Mirza 1997:478, Martin et al. 2006:8, Walters 2010:4, Maylor et al. 2010:37). This

has led a London MP to call attention to the fact that, while some complementary schools are large and well resourced,

the majority are small, cash-poor projects, reliant on the altruism of local parents, businesses and community groups. The problems and frustrations that they encounter will be familiar to anyone involved in community development and informal education: they lack funding and sometimes teaching resources, their teachers are often untrained, and they can struggle to find premises. (UK Parliament 2008)⁵⁰

Throughout fieldwork at ELA, it was made clear to me that there was an urgent need to secure funding, be it by collecting parental contributions, seeking assistance from the Local Authority, applying for grants, or making amateur attempts at fundraising (e.g., Fieldnotes 07/03/09, 06/06/09, 13/06/09, 20/06/09, 07/11/09, 30/01/10, 22/05/10, 29/05/10). Unlike some other schools, ELA had high running costs: its director, Euclides, insisted on hiring a modern, state-of-the-art, but expensive primary school, and on employing around ten paid members of staff. Euclides recognised that the premises were costly but argued that they were worth it, pointing out that **“there are cheaper spaces [but] a community building doesn’t offer the same facilities ... the kids [would be] put together ... we would lose our character”** (Fieldnotes 26/09/09). Despite his doggedness, the strain and the uncertainty of keeping the school financially viable caused him and his wife, the school accountant, high levels of stress. Both were very keen for me to help them write funding applications; I helped them with three bids but, due to the amount of work and the pressure that these applications represented, I eventually withdrew from the process. In addition, I attended a course on fundraising on behalf of ELA (as neither Euclides nor his wife were available) (cf. Section 3.5.1).

Not all politicians have championed the cause of complementary schooling, like the Labour MP mentioned above, and there has been disagreement regarding their purpose and, implicitly, whose responsibility it is to subsidise them. As a result of their research, Dr. Warren and Prof. Gillborn were invited by the Blair government’s Select Committee on Education and Skills to testify on educational provision in Birmingham. In his introduction, the chairman framed the discussion within questions such as whether “the Government’s diversity agenda will deliver good value for taxpayers’ money,” thus emphasising the interest of the Committee in making both evaluative and economic assessments (UK Government 2002). Not long after, Dr Warren claimed that “the diversity and range of complementary schools in the city is ... an indicator of how these communities feel that the mainstream education service has failed them.” One of the MPs, Mr Chaytor, later retorted:

⁵⁰ Joan Ryan (Labour, Enfield North), speaking during a parliamentary discussion on complementary schools on 26/02/08 (UK Parliament 2008).

On this question of supplementary education, I do not quite see how what you have described is necessarily a consequence of a sense of failure of the system. How is that different from middle-class parents employing private tutors to get their kids into Oxford? It does not necessarily imply loss of faith in the system. It is purely a result of the competitive pressures and the desire to encourage your kids to succeed, is it not? (UK Government 2002)⁵¹

Shortly after, Dr Warren responded by saying:

The picture that you have painted there is of a group of middle-class aspirant parents who are responding to a very competitive situation, who want their children to go to Oxford or Cambridge or a higher status university, which is quite different in intention from Black communities in Birmingham and other cities who are responding to historic and endemic experience of under-achievement. It is not the same. (ibid.)

The tension between Warren & Gillborn's (2003) findings and this exchange suggests different perspectives on complementary schools. They are described both as “grassroots educational movements” (Reay & Mirza 1997:477), dedicated to serving the most disadvantaged in society, *and* as organisations catering for “middle-class aspirant parents” (Mr Chaytor, see above), who want to equip their children with additional capital and privilege. Thus, they can be seen as (a) enriching the ethnocultural identity of young people, and should therefore be funded by the state, or (b) romanticised homework clubs, which provide extra-curricular activities that parents should subsidise. In the next section, I examine how ELA positioned itself in relation to these discourses, by looking at how it represented the Latin American community to legitimate its existence and purpose, and how it also appealed to users outside this community.

4.3 Discursive representations of ELA

The aim of this section is to analyse how ELA articulated its purpose and described its ‘target community,’ or intended users, in texts formulated for, and then circulated by, the Charity Commission, the local authority, and the think-tank Civitas. The texts reproduced here were found as a result of Internet searches for background information about the school. The similarities and contrasts between them illustrate some important points about the nexus between ethnicity and language in complementary schooling. Far from betraying inconsistency or deceit on the part of ELA, the divergent representations that emerge highlight the very ethnopolitical pressures that compelled a school like ELA to adapt and adopt shifting positions in order to secure credibility and funding.

⁵¹ Mr Chaytor was then Labour MP for Bury North.

4.3.1 Source A: Charity Commission

As a charity with an annual income of over £5,000, ELA had to register with the Charity Commission and abide by charity law. In order to ensure legal compliance and enhance accountability, the independent regulator expects to receive from each charity detailed information about its purpose, remit, activities, and finances (Charity Commission, no date). These data are then divided into categories, processed into graphs, and listed in the Commission’s online register of charities. Within ELA’s profile on this register, I focus here on the section entitled “Charity framework,” which outlined its aims and remit (see Figure 4.1).

The screenshot shows the Charity Commission website interface. At the top, there is a search bar with the text "Search for a charity" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar is a navigation menu with links: Home, About us, Our regulatory activity, Manage your charity, Start up a charity, and Charity requirements and guidance. The main content area is titled "In this section..." and contains a sidebar with links: Register of Charities home, Charity overview, Contact & trustees, Charity framework (highlighted), View accounts, and Print charity details. The main content area displays the charity's profile, including a green banner with "DUE DOCUMENTS RECEIVED". The profile details are as follows:

| Other names | Date registered |
|-------------|-----------------|
| NONE | [REDACTED] |

| Governing document | Classification |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| MEMORANDUM AND ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION INCORPORATED 10 JUNE [REDACTED] AS AMENDED BY SPECIAL RESOLUTION DATED 7 FEBRUARY [REDACTED] | What <ul style="list-style-type: none">• GENERAL CHARITABLE PURPOSES• EDUCATION / TRAINING• ARTS / CULTURE / HERITAGE / SCIENCE• AMATEUR SPORT |

| Area of benefit | Who |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| [REDACTED] AND OTHER AREAS IN GREATER LONDON | • PEOPLE OF A PARTICULAR ETHNIC OR RACIAL ORIGIN |

| Charitable objects | How |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (1) TO PROMOTE THE BENEFIT OF PEOPLE OF LATIN AMERICAN DESCENT, INCLUDING THEIR FAMILIES AND DEPENDENTS RESIDENT OR WORKING IN CAMDEN, AND THE BOROUGH OF LONDON WHERE APPROPRIATE, BY: (A) THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING; (B) THE RELIEF OF POVERTY, SICKNESS AND DISTRESS; (C) THE PROMOTION OF GOOD HEALTH, AND (D) THE PROVISION OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE INTERESTS OF SOCIAL WELFARE WITH THE OBJECT OF IMPROVING THEIR CONDITIONS OF LIFE (2) TO ADVANCE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC ON ALL ASPECTS OF LATIN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• PROVIDES HUMAN RESOURCES• PROVIDES BUILDINGS / FACILITIES / OPEN SPACE• PROVIDES SERVICES• PROVIDES ADVOCACY / ADVICE / INFORMATION |

Figure 4.1 Screenshot of ELA’s charity framework

On the right-hand side of the screen, in the subsection “Who,” ELA described itself as catering for:

- People of a particular ethnic or racial origin

Data extract 4A. Targeted service users of ELA on the Charity Commission website

This emphasis on ethnicity was repeated elsewhere, in ELA’s accounts for 2007/2008, where “100%” of “those benefiting from [their] services” were described as coming from “black and ethnic minority communities.” In the centre of the screen, ELA listed its “Charitable objects” as:

- (1) to promote the benefit of people of Latin American decent, including their families and dependents resident or working in [borough X], and the boroughs of London where appropriate, by:
- (a) the advancement of education and training;
 - (b) the relief of poverty, sickness and distress;
 - (c) the promotion of good health, and
 - (d) the provision of recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life
- (2) to advance education of the public on all aspects of Latin American history and culture.

Data extract 4B. Charitable objects of ELA on the Charity Commission website

This list of objectives was not exclusive to ELA; with the exception of the geographic information (“Latin American” and the name of the borough), it was *identical* to the description of at least one other charity, suggesting that it constituted a type of template or resulted from the generic advice given to new charities.⁵² ELA’s charitable aims also coincide with three of the five outcomes outlined by the Every Child Matters strategy, an initiative launched by Blair’s Labour government to reform and better coordinate children’s services (UK Government 2003). The correspondence is illustrated in the table below:

| ELA’s charitable aims | Every Child Matters outcomes |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (a) the advancement of education and training | 3. Enjoying and achieving: getting the most out of life and developing broad skills for adulthood 5. Economic wellbeing: overcoming socio-economic disadvantages to achieve their full potential in life. |
| (b) the relief of poverty, sickness and distress | 1. Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle 5. Economic wellbeing: overcoming socio-economic disadvantages to achieve their full potential in life. |
| (c) the promotion of good health | 1. Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle |
| (d) the provision of recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life | 1. Being healthy: enjoying good physical and mental health and living a healthy lifestyle 5. Economic wellbeing: overcoming socio-economic disadvantages to achieve their full potential in life |

Table 4.1 Comparison between ELA’s charitable aims and Every Child Matters outcomes

⁵² The description of ELA’s aims and objectives was practically identical to that of an organisation located in the Greater London borough of Redbridge:

- (1) To promote the benefit of the French speaking community in Redbridge by:
- (a) the advancement of education and training;
 - (b) the relief of poverty, sickness and distress;
 - (c) the promotion of good health; and
 - (d) the provision of recreational facilities in the interests of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life;
- (2) to advance education of the public on all aspects of the African Caribbean history and culture. (Charities Direct, no date). Retrieved 14/01/10.

The concordance between ELA's charitable aims and the wording of the Charity Commission guidelines as well as with the Every Child Matters outcomes, is part of its legitimatising, and therefore 'marketing,' strategy, given that this list of aims was precisely the information reproduced by other charity directories, and thus was more widely disseminated.⁵³

What is surprising in this text is what it does *not* say: no mention is made of language learning or Spanish. This absence can be justified if language tuition is considered to be subsumed within the idea of "the advancement of education and training," yet other complementary schools from the same borough did emphasise their linguistic role. Thus, in the same online register, a Somali school described its *first* charitable object as "advance education by the provision of language and other classes" while a Chinese school defined it as "to advance the education of the public in particular those of Chinese ethnic origin in the Chinese language and culture."⁵⁴ For ELA, a complementary school whose core *raison d'être* was arguably the teaching of Spanish, it is surprising that no reference is made to its main activity, while at the same time highlighting "the promotion of good health," a role that was certainly not prominent during fieldwork. Instead, it concentrates on features that construct it as a worthwhile recipient of recognition and funding: firstly, the school supports *a particular ethnic group* (Data extract 4.A), Latin Americans, with little visibility in Britain and which evokes disadvantaged political refugees and economic migrants rather than a well-provided for, cosmopolitan élite. Secondly it is concerned with addressing pressing social issues (such as "the relief of poverty") (Data extract 4.B, object (1)). Thirdly, it makes a contribution to wider society by educating the public on "all aspects of Latin American history and culture" (Data extract 4.B object (2)). In sum, in Data extracts 4A and 4B, EAL draws on two discourses: firstly, the representation of Latin Americans as a Black and Ethnic Minority (BEM), which requires various forms of support to counter problems such as deprivation, disadvantage, and educational underachievement, and, secondly, the value and desirability of Latin American heritage for the London public in general.

⁵³ Charity Commission Guidelines, retrieved 24/01/11 from <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/index.aspx>. Profile of ELA on Charities Direct and Charity Finder UK, retrieved 14/01/10.

⁵⁴ Retrieved 24/01/11 from <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/SHOWCHARITY/RegisterOfCharities/CharityFramework.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1100876&SubsidiaryNumber=0> and <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/SHOWCHARITY/RegisterOfCharities/CharityFramework.aspx?RegisteredCharityNumber=1024738&SubsidiaryNumber=0>

4.3.2 Source B: Local Authority

Having looked at how ELA defined its purpose to key players in the national charity sector, I now turn to how it presented itself to more local actors: potential service users. On the website of the Local Authority where ELA was located, the general public could read two accounts of the school's purpose: in the general section 'Community and Living' and in the Supplementary School Directory.

'Community and Living'

In the section 'Community and Living,' ELA described its functions as follows:

Promotes social integration of people of Latin American descent and their families, while maintaining positive aspects of community culture, heritage and language. Provides community support for Spanish speaking children and also runs Spanish lessons for adults.⁵⁵

Data extract 4C. Functions of ELA on Local Authority website

There were two ways to come across this text. The first one was by looking for provision aimed at minority communities and then for 'Contacts for Latin American people' (cf. Figure 4.2). The types of contacts offered on this latter page were services for Latin American residents, in areas such as advocacy and welfare (e.g., Carila and LAWRS).⁵⁶

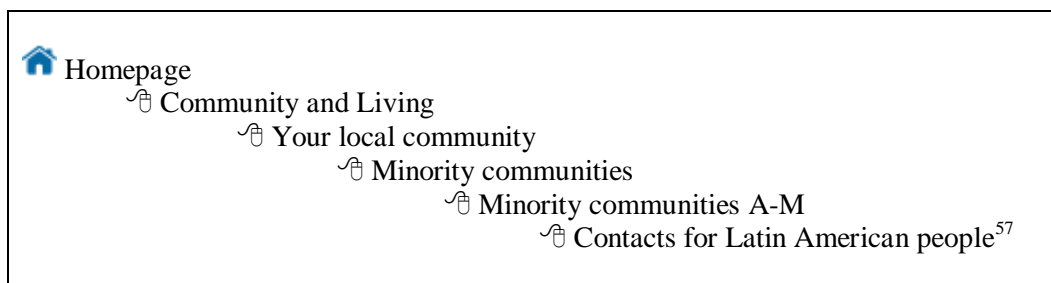



Figure 4.2 Stages to access 'Contacts for Latin American people'

Having contextualised the location of Data extract 4C, I now want to analyse the contents of this extract in terms of *who* it proclaims to serve and *how*. ELA's commitment to the "social integration of people of Latin American descent and their families" fits with the

⁵⁵ Wanting to ascertain the exact authorship of this text, I rang the local community database and was told that the information found in this section was usually provided by individual organisations, although it could be amended to fit the database's requirements (for example by editing possessive pronouns, i.e., changing 'our' to 'their'). According to the employee I spoke to, the description of ELA was in all probability issued by the school and not rectified by the department running the database.

⁵⁶ Carila was listed, inter alia, as offering an "advice and information service for the Latin American community throughout London" and "providing free interpreter/advocates in the areas of welfare benefits, housing, education and health". For LAWRS, cf. 1.1.1.

⁵⁷ The symbol  indicates that one needed to click on the following section.

representation of the Latin American community as a group that suffers from known problems, such as hardship, discrimination, and irregularity, and of BEM communities more generally as groups not wholly or sufficiently ‘integrated’ into society (cf. Sections 1.1.1, 4.3.1), and which therefore require agencies such as LAWRS and ELA to cater for their specific needs. A further aim listed in this same extract is to maintain “positive aspects of community culture, heritage and language.” By contrast with Data extract 4B (“*all aspects* of Latin American history and culture” [my emphasis]), the remit is more selective here: the school aims to focus on “*positive* aspects” [my emphasis] of Latin American culture. Given the negative image of Latin America, the inclusion of the qualifier “positive” needs to be viewed alongside other attempts to improve the image of Latin America and Latin Americans. As demonstrated in Chapters 1 (Section 1.1.3) and 3 (Section 3.5.1, 3.7), on a global scale, Latin America is associated with violence/crime (at state and street level), political instability, and drug-trafficking. Colombia in particular suffers from a poor global image: it was recently found to be the Latin American country with the worst reputation, and was just ahead of Angola, Nigeria, Irak, and Iran in a global ranking (*El Mundo* 29/09/11). On a local scale, studies have reported that the Latin American community in London suffers from intra-group envy and exploitation, as well as a lack of mutual support between members (cf. Section 1.1.3). These internecine characteristics were also described to me by the director of ELA and his wife (Fieldnotes 06/06/09, 13/06/09); during one of these conversations, the director privately asserted that the project of the school represented an attempt to counter this lack of community spirit (Fieldnotes 13/06/09). Consequently, ELA’s desire to focus on the “positive aspects of community culture” has to be contextualised within the circulation of certain negative discourses that depict Latin America as dangerous and unstable, and portray the London Latin American community as unscrupulous and fragmented. This desire can be seen as part of a wider attempt on behalf of Latin American organisations in London (such as Belén’s dance group, cf. Section 3.5.3), to gain more positive recognition and to foster ethnic pride among London Latinos, especially the younger generation.⁵⁸ Thus, by providing “community support,” the school produces a discourse of ethnic solidarity and groupness, which runs counter to representations of abuse and division.

The second way of coming across Data extract 4C was by looking at language provision and then at ‘Contacts for children’s language classes’ (cf. Figure 4.3).

⁵⁸ For instance, the Indoamerican Refugee Migrant Organisation has a youth initiative, the Latin American Youth Forum, which supports the involvement of over fifty youths in their communities, helps them address issues concerning their cultural identity, and pushes them away from *existing negative stereotypical images* [my emphasis] (IRMO; document handed out at the screening of Latin American Youth Forum short films at the British Film Institute).

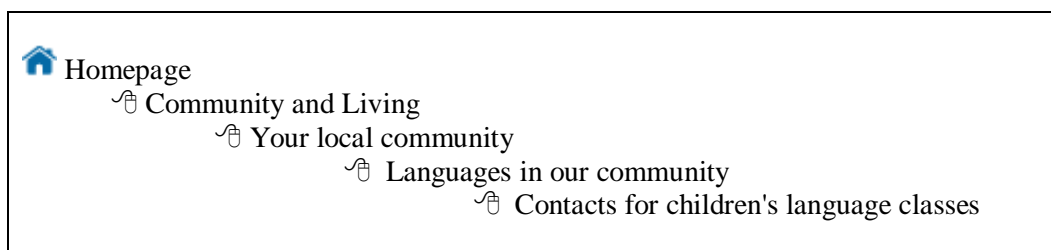


Figure 4.3 Stages to access ‘Contacts for children’s language classes’

In Data extract 4C, ELA “[p]rovides community support for Spanish speaking children and also runs Spanish lessons for adults.” In the context of ‘Contacts for children’s language classes,’ the “community support for Spanish speaking children” can be understood as language tuition, specifically Spanish, for children. Here ELA no longer seems to restrict its provision to an underprivileged BEM and to Latin Americans, since “Spanish speaking children” could refer to children of Spanish descent, and Spanish migrants in London are not known for suffering from, e.g., a lack of access to welfare services because of immigration status. Furthermore, the mention of “Spanish lessons for adults” widens the school’s remit further, as these classes are unlikely to be aimed at ‘native’ Spanish speakers, but are rather directed at the general public seeking to learn Spanish. In sum, EAL’s discursive strategy in Data extract 4C is similar to the one used in the previous two extracts, 4A and 4B, in that it is seen to be fulfilling a specific *social* function (supporting the integration of an ethnic minority) and a more general *cultural* function (maintaining community culture). It differs from the previous two extracts insofar as its focus on “positive aspects” of community suggests an awareness of, and a resistance to, negative discourses about Latin America and Latin Americans in London. Finally, it also presents itself as fulfilling a *linguistic* function (Spanish lessons for children and adults), which suggests a widening of its remit beyond its social/BME and cultural/heritage roles.

Supplementary schools directory 2011-2012

The Local Authority also provided information about ELA in its Supplementary Schools Directory for 2011-2012. Signed by the Local Authority’s director of Children, Schools and Families, the foreword of this directory starts by saying:

[Borough X] Local Authority values the important role complementary schools play in improving educational standards and helping children get the best from learning. We recognise the hard work and commitment of complementary schools in promoting the social inclusion of children from [borough X]’s diverse ethnic minority communities and their contribution to building the cultural identity and self-esteem of the children they serve.

Bearing in mind that exam results are used to measure the relative success or failure of Local Authorities, here, the discourse of the Local Authority towards complementary schools is that it is aware of and values the contribution they make to raising “educational standards” and “helping children get the best from learning.” Furthermore it describes the work of complementary schools as “promoting the social inclusion of children” from “ethnic minority communities,” thereby reiterating the discourse that represents BEM communities as marginalised in some way and needing further social inclusion. This formulation also suggests that complementary schools, including ELA, serve “ethnic minority communities.” Finally, the schools are commended for their cultural and psychological benefits: “building the cultural identity and self-esteem of children,” which could imply a deficit conception of BEM children as somehow culturally and psychologically incomplete or conflicted (a discourse which also circulates among BEM groups).

The Directory lists a total of 16 schools, which are grouped according to nationality or ethnicity (e.g., Somali, Afro-Caribbean). The details provided for each school are succinct; they include practical information such as, inter alia, the community served and the subjects taught. In the case of ELA, the latter information is as follows:

Community served: Latin American mainly but open to all communities
Subjects taught: Spanish, mathematics, science, geography, dance, music, drama, painting and history. All subjects are taught in mother-tongue (Spanish)
Data extract 4E. Information on ELA in Supplementary Schools Directory 2011-2012

Practically all the schools in this directory declare that they serve a particular community, either defined by ethnicity, nationality, and/or language (i.e., “Bangladeshi”, “Afghan community and Persian/Pashto speaking communities”). The Chinese school states that the community it serves is “Chinese (open to all)”, which could be understood as “all types of Chinese”, e.g., Cantonese and Mandarin speakers, or could be interpreted as an opening to non-Chinese students. In that case, the bracketing of “open to all” could be construed as a concession or as an implicit recognition that few non-Chinese would want to join. ELA stands out for being *the only school that unequivocally welcomes students from other groups*. It acknowledges that it “mainly” serves the Latin American community but issues a much more assertive and comprehensive welcome to non-Latin Americans: it is “open to all communities.” This openness first sounds commendably non-discriminatory, although it

⁵⁹ Given that this foreword is identical to the one signed by a previous director of Children, Schools and Families in the previous Supplementary Schools Directory (2008), its authorship is uncertain. It may have been drafted by the previous director or by a civil servant. In any case, it can be assumed that this text embodies an institutional rather than a personal position.

could contradict its commitment to a BEM. In the list of subjects, Spanish appears first, reflecting its status as main subject/skill taught at ELA. It is also identified as the language of instruction and as the “mother-tongue” (cf. Section 2.4.3). Considering that complementary schools have historically been set up by and for a determinate community (cf. Section 4.3.1), often one that shared a language other than (Standard) English, it does make sense that ELA conceives of its ‘target community’ as Latin American families where Spanish is the parents’ first language. It also follows that, in order to follow science and history classes *in Spanish*, students must have a certain level of proficiency. Where do “all communities” fit in then? Are these in fact all other “Spanish-speaking communities” (which are concentrated in Latin America, the USA, and Spain)? If the school welcomes any students, even those who do not have a Spanish-speaking background, will they be able to understand the lessons? As a result there could be a tension between proclaimed ethnic inclusiveness and actual exclusive teaching practices; this will be looked at in more detail in the next chapter (Sections 5.3.4, 5.3.5).

In sum, in Data extract 4D, EAL potentially moves away from the “100% BEM students” evoked on the Charity Commission’s website (Section 4.3.1) as it is “open to all,” although this inclusive stance is moderated by the implication that Spanish proficiency is required to follow lessons. As in the previous extracts, the emphasis is on providing for a determined minority community *and* appealing to the general public.

4.3.3 Source C: Civitas

Civitas, the Institute for the Study of Civil Society, is a research institute “independent of political parties” and government funding (Civitas, no date), although it is known to have had links with the Conservative party. Its aim is, according to its own description, to “[publish] informed comment and analysis” of social issues as well as to “implement pioneering projects to demonstrate what can be accomplished” (ibid.). As part of its commitment to social change, Civitas has been building a network of “supplementary schools” since 2005; at the time of writing, it had eighteen schools operating in community centres across England. According to the Project Director, their objective is to raise aspiration and attainment among children from “underprivileged backgrounds,” whichever their ethnic origin (Rogerson 2010).

In 2006, Civitas issued a special edition of its publication, *Civitas Review*, on the topic of complementary schools. In an extended article entitled ‘Supplementary schools: civil society strikes back’, the authors criticised the Blair government’s record on (falling) social mobility, (unsatisfactory) standards, and (over-) spending, and constructed complementary

schools as symptomatic of “the public’s dissatisfaction with the government’s failed education system” (Seddon et al. 2006:9).⁶⁰

The article starts by giving an attractive description of a supplementary school, before providing general information about their number and heterogeneity (interestingly including the international, profit-making Kumon franchise as part of the sector).⁶¹ It moves on to focus on the voluntary and charitable organisations that cater “for the poor,” commenting that these “tend to have arisen to target particular challenges in specific communities” (2006:5). It then presents three case-studies, among which is ELA, described in the following paragraph:

Some complementary schools have been created to concentrate on community language learning. Founded six years ago specifically for London’s Latin American community, the ELA Saturday Supplementary School sprung up as a reaction to gathering concern about the widening intergenerational language gap within families. Although the general objective was to offer Spanish language speakers better academic opportunities, the specific objective was to ensure that the children of immigrant parents remained bi-lingual so that they could still converse with their parents in their native tongue. Based in North London, it is now open to any student who is eager to learn in a Spanish environment – all classes are conducted in Spanish – and it runs lessons in maths, history, music and drama. Such schools can be found in all parts of the country where there are minority language communities, and especially in London.

Data extract 4F. Description of ELA in *Civitas Review*

Unlike the previous texts, which gave a concise description of ELA’s purpose, this text is concerned with constructing a narrative of its rationale, spanning distinct time frames (from “six years ago” to “now”). The paragraph starts by describing ELA’s function in terms of “community language learning,” thereby emphasising its linguistic and minority dimensions. Expressions like “gathering concern” and “widening intergenerational language gap” associate this community with a sense of trepidation, threat, and social fragmentation. The specific objective of ELA is defined as making sure that “children of immigrant parents

⁶⁰ The description of ELA in this article differs from the previous texts in that it was not produced in the school’s name. In fact I cannot be sure exactly how the text came about or to what extent it reflected the view of the school. However, it echoes some of the views expressed by the director, and co-founder, of the school during our conversations, which leads me to conjecture that the article was written after the Civitas researcher(s) spoke to him. I would therefore speculate that this text is double-voiced and constitutes the author’s interpretive re-presentation of the director’s words. This weakens its reliability as a ‘direct’ representation issued by the school but does not disqualify it from being treated alongside the previous texts. The authors Nick Seddon and Nick Cowen are both Oxbridge graduates working as researchers for Civitas. No information could be found on the third author, Oliver Tree, which suggests he may have worked as external researcher/contributor for the article.

⁶¹ According to the article, the Kumon franchise supports a network of 550 complementary schools. It charges £85 a month for tuition in maths and English and constitutes, according to the authors, a “dynamic commercial [business] with a social purpose” (Seddon et al. 2006:5).

remained bi-lingual so that they could still converse with their parents in their native tongue.” Here, it is not clear whether the threat is that these children cease to speak Spanish or that, by doing so, they are no longer able to communicate effectively with the older generations; in other words, is it a question of language shift or of communication failure? This is an important distinction, as the inability or refusal of the younger generation to speak a minority language does not necessarily entail that families cannot communicate. It may be that the younger ones speak in English, while the older ones speak in Spanish. Or they may all speak in English instead, which would only be problematic if Spanish is construed as an essential part of authentic or actualised ‘cultural identity.’ If the assumption is that children of Latin American families have, or even should have, Spanish as their native language, then this betrays a particular conception of minorities. The children are primarily seen as migrants rather than British, which has repercussions for the expectations made of their linguistic, and by extension ethnic, allegiance. (The extent to which, at ELA, Spanish was perceived as the parents’ and children’s ‘mother tongue’ will be explored in the next chapter, Sections 5.2, 5.3.)

In addition the objective to offer children “better academic opportunities” chimes with the discourse that implies that BEM children require academic support because they underachieve. The article also informs the reader that ELA was founded “specifically for London’s Latin American community,” but that “it is now open to any student who is eager to learn in a Spanish environment.” As observed in all the previous extracts (4A to 4E), there is a broadening of remit, whereby ELA’s commitment to the Latin American community cohabits discursively with assurances of ethnic inclusiveness. In the next section, I discuss what these representations of (a) the Latin American community and its heritage, and (b) ELA’s remit and purpose, tell us about the ethno-political context in which the school operated.

4.4 Discussion

By analysing Data extracts 4A to 4F, it has been possible to identify some discrepancies and possible contradictions between the discursive representations of ELA. Of course, variations in style and content between these texts can be expected, given that they belonged to different contexts and followed different genre conventions. Yet the desired outcome of all these descriptions is essentially the same: to come across as an organisation that does valuable work, which is worth recognising by either using its services or supporting it financially. It is indispensable for ELA to convince prospective parents and funders (be it the Local Authority or a non-governmental funding body) that it deserves their backing, as,

without it, it cannot survive. In this section I argue that, in the texts presented here, ELA occupies three different discursive positions: (a) as an ethnic minority charity, (b) as a Latin American community project, and (c) as a language school.

4.4.1 ELA as ethnic minority charity

ELA positions itself explicitly as a charity in Data extract 4B, and is implicitly portrayed as such in Data extract 4F; moreover, in all of the texts included here, it is presented as a school that caters for a “specific” ethnic minority. This representation frames it as an *ethnic minority charity*. As explained in 2.3.2, in the UK, historic discrimination and institutionalised racism against ethnic minorities have resulted in statutory obligations to monitor ethnicity and to strive towards offering ‘equal opportunities’ to all. As a result, there is pressure on local authorities to demonstrate that they are aware of the number of ethnic minority residents in their borough, and that they are able to address their most pressing needs, since “minoritized populations are defined by ethnic difference, and are disadvantaged in a society that sustains a majoritarian ‘story’ of the nation” (Fenton 2011). Although not exclusively (e.g., the widespread conception of Chinese students, cf. Archer & Francis 2005), ethnic minority young people have been associated with discourses of underachievement, poor integration, and underrepresentation in sectors of the education system (cf. Connor et al. 2004; DFES 2006; Archer & Francis 2007; Mirza 2009). Presenting one’s purpose as benefiting an “ethnic minority”, particularly its younger generation, therefore taps into a Big ‘C’ Conversation (Gee 2011) about ethnic minority groups and their relative integration into British society.⁶² Part of this ongoing debate in the UK has focused on the alleged internal conflicts that ethnic minority families face as a result of orienting towards ‘their’ culture as well as British culture. From this conception arises the “pathologising notion of young people caught between ‘two cultures’” (Cohen 1999:6-7). Language plays a key role in this Conversation, as discourses of communication failure between ethnic minority generations abound. David Blunkett’s contribution to this debate, following the race riots in Oldham and Bradford in 2001, is notorious for its incendiary formulation:

However, speaking English enables parents to converse with their children in English, as well as in their historic mother tongue, at home and to participate in wider modern

⁶² Gee (2011:55) describes Big ‘C’ Conversation as “general societal discussions around issues like abortion or smoking ... public debates that swirl around us in the media, in our reading, and in our interactions with other people.”

culture. It helps overcome the *schizophrenia which bedevils generational relationships*. [my emphasis] (Griffith & Leonard 2002:77)

David Blunkett's claim is part of a wider discourse that portrays (at least some) families as divided by a lack of shared language, with the younger generation speaking English while the older generation has refused or failed to learn how to do so. This vision of a dichotomous, or "schizophrenic," linguistic situation in BEM families is conveyed in the Civitas article through its depiction of an "intergenerational language gap" (Data extract 4F).

By stating that it is concerned with goals such as "the relief of poverty" (Data extract 4B), "social integration" (Data extract 4C), and "better academic opportunities" (Data extract 4F), ELA can be seen to be bringing legitimate "social goods" (Gee 2011:24). Moreover, it is not only seen as benefiting young people, but as contributing to the cohesion of the *whole family*, thus playing an important social role in redressing social inequalities and improving the life chances of deprived families. Consequently, ELA can appear to be like the complementary schools praised by Mirza & Reay (2000) and Hall et al. (2002): transformative and empowering. However, given the very competitive funding context in the UK, it not only draws on generic discourses of BEMs in need, but also on specific ethnic community discourses.

4.4.2 ELA as Latin American community project

As governments become increasingly sensitive to ethno-political demands, ethnic groups are thereby given an incentive to organise themselves in cohesive interest groups for the extraction of desired policies and outputs (Rothschild 1981:61). This can lead to "strategic essentialism" (Spivak 1984), in other words, the reification of the ethnic community for political purposes. Indeed, reifying groups is exactly what ethno-political entrepreneurs are in the business of doing (Brubaker 2004:10). Rothschild (1981:27-28) identifies the contextual factors that facilitate this type of discourse:

This ideologisation of ethnicity through the sacralisation of ethnic markers ... occurs in times of social strain, competition, and confrontation, when the ethnic leaders persuade the bearers and sharers of the ethnic culture-markers to perceive their fate in ethnic, rather than individual or class, terms and convince them that without ethnic communal solidarity their distinctive values, customs and traits are endangered.

The "social strain" and "competition" can be fittingly applied to the situation of complementary schools that (a) depend financially on funding bodies, and therefore that (b) rely on their ability to project an image that will satisfy the requirements of charitable donors. This image is all the more convincing if it corresponds to that of a specific ethnic

community, which can be distinguished from other groups (e.g., through its particular language and culture), and for which there is limited existing support (as is the case of the Latin American population in London). In addition, the emphasis on ELA's commitment to Latin American families can be understood as part of a concerted attempt to make the Latin American community in London more *visible*. By having its own services and institutions, a group becomes more conspicuous; as its presence becomes more apparent, so the pressure on governmental agencies to acknowledge its existence and respond to its needs becomes greater. This search for ethnic visibility goes hand in hand with the campaign for ethnic recognition described in Sections 1.1.1 and 2.3.2.

Given these strong arguments for describing ELA as a *Latin American* organisation, one might have expected that the school would restrict itself to its ethnolinguistic remit (the Latin American community), yet in most of these texts, it also makes a point of welcoming students from other communities.

4.4.3 ELA as language school

ELA's third role can be discerned in the way in which it widens its remit and its 'target community' in every data extract presented here:

- In Text 4B, there is a move from "people of Latin American descent" to "the public."
- In Text 4C, the shift is from "people of Latin American descent" to "Spanish-speaking children" and "adults."
- In Text 4E, it goes from the Latin American community to "all communities."
- In Text 4F, it progresses from "London's Latin American community" to "any student who is eager to learn in a Spanish environment."

By appealing to people from "all communities," ELA can be seen to be expressing a conscious decision to encourage multiethnic mixing and not to be ghettoised as an exclusively Latin American institution. Indeed, on one occasion, the director asked me for help with launching one of his latest schemes: to invite students studying Spanish for GCSE from neighbouring secondary schools, so that there could be a social and cultural exchange between them and the pupils at ELA (Fieldnotes 30/01/10). Although it had not been carried out by the time I left the school, this project would confirm that the school was interested in attracting users beyond its 'target community.' What is perhaps more likely is that the school was taking a pragmatic position and realised that, given the valuable currency of Spanish, it could attract more pupils by not restricting its remit to Latin Americans. This desire to be appealing to as many families as possible reflects a powerful commercial imperative: the greater number of students it could appeal to, the greater amount of parental contributions,

and the greater impact it could demonstrate to the Local Authority, which could then justify further institutional support. Thus, the move away from an ethnicity-specific group to one that is defined by language learning reveals ELA's awareness of the desirable features of its main 'product.' Spanish enjoys a particular standing: it is a 'world language', with the second highest number of first language speakers (329 million people), in 44 different countries (Lewis 2009).⁶³ In postcolonial terms, it is still an élite language which benefits from a high 'language status' (cf. Section 2.4.2). Beyond being a 'minority language', it is also a 'fashionable' modern foreign language (MFL).⁶⁴ Having enjoyed a gradual but steady increase in popularity in UK secondary schools, while the other two main MFLs, French and German, have suffered a stark decline in numbers, Spanish is now the second most commonly available language in maintained and independent schools (CILT et al. 2011:7).⁶⁵ It is a prized language with high currency on the job market: consequently, learning it can be regarded as a means to acquire cultural capital, in order to accrue benefits and advantage in the fields of education and employment.

So why not simply present itself as a Spanish-speaking school, as other complementary schools have done? Firstly, it is very important for the school to retain its Latin American name and character, not only because it forms part of a wider agenda to place the "Latin American community" on the London map, but chiefly because of a genuine commitment on the part of the staff to serve 'their community.' Secondly, the danger of becoming a Spanish school is that it would risk appearing as a useful extra-curricular activity for aspiring families, rather than as a needed social resource for disadvantaged families (cf. Section 4.2.2). By conserving its Latin American label, it could draw on its BEM dimension and its associated connotations (cf. Section 4.4.1).

In some ways, ELA is therefore comparable to Champlain, the French language school located in English-dominant Ontario (cf. Heller 2006). Like Champlain, ELA "shows us a vision of pluralist pragmatism, in which language becomes capital and not emblem, and in which the school, as a social institution, plays a key role in producing and distributing that

⁶³ There are obvious problems with the classification of people as first or second language speakers (notably the situation of bilinguals and people who no longer use their first language) but the figures do give a *relative* sense of how widely a language is spoken.

⁶⁴ Funded by the Spanish government, the *Instituto Cervantes* (Cervantes Institute) exists to promote the Spanish language and cultures of Spanish-speaking countries and now has 70 centres in four continents (retrieved 05/09/11 from http://londres.cervantes.es/en/about_us_spanish.htm). The rise in its global number of students enrolled to learn Spanish is a relative indicator of the increasing popularity of this language: a year after the Institute had opened, in 1992, there were 8,806 students enrolled. In 1999/2000, this had grown to 53,834, and in the year 2010/2011, the number had soared to 134,487 (personal communication with the *Instituto Cervantes*, dated 06/09/11).

⁶⁵ According to the latest Language Trends survey carried out by CILT, the number of pupils studying French in English schools has shrunk from 295,211 in 1994 to 160,600 in 2010; for German, numbers have fallen from 110,446 to 65,800; while Spanish has doubled in numbers, from 28,000 to 58,200 (CILT 2011).

newly valued capital” (Heller 2006:213). Similarly, ELA finds itself balancing the “old politics of identity” with an “economics of language” (ibid.), where the legitimization brought by its BME/Latin American status is complemented by the marketability of Spanish. Thus, drawing from Heller (2006), it can be argued that ELA’s legitimacy in these texts is based on contradictory things: it needs to be authentically Latin American yet, in the context of London as global city, it also benefits from the desirability and commodification of aspects of Latin American heritage.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter analysed how a Latin American school – ELA – represented its purpose and target community in official texts aimed at the Charity Commission and the general public, in order to find out how the Latin American community was imagined in this particular institutional setting. I argued that ELA resorted to different legitimating strategies to appeal to funders and service users. These consisted in (a) highlighting its credentials as an *ethnic minority charity*, catering for BEM, disadvantaged families; (b) emphasising its grassroots character, its commitment to preserving cultural heritage, and its effort to increase the visibility of its community, by being a *Latin American community project*; and (c) presenting itself as a *language school*, providing Spanish tuition and education about Latin American culture to the general public. As a result, with regards to representationality, in this chapter, *latinidad* was shaped by the ethnopolitical specificities of the UK context, where BEMs are associated with potential adversity and underachievement and can therefore claim to be in need (of targeted funding, decent premises, and so forth). In addition *latinidad* was linked to cultural products whose desirability could counterbalance the negative stereotypes associated with Latin America. Indeed the Spanish language and Latin American cultural heritage could appeal to aspirant parents wanting to equip their child with extra linguistic and cultural capital. By extension, the Latin American community could be seen as a deserving minority, because its members are associated with a disadvantaged social position, and because it offers desirable cultural commodities in a global city.

This analysis has uncovered that, on paper at least, ELA served as more than a Latin American community institution. The next chapter marks a move from a digital field (textual representations found online) to a material field: it describes life at ELA in more detail and attends to the discourses voiced by the staff and the parents. It pursues the questions that arose in this chapter, such as the ideological and instrumental functions of ELA and whether there were any tensions arising from the different roles – (a) to (c) – outlined above. It also investigates how the linkage between Latin American ethnicity and the Spanish language

played out among adults, in particular how they represented and evaluated the language practices of Latino families.

Chapter 5 – “Our language Spanish”: Language ideologies and ethnic affiliation at ELA

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 4, I examined the different discursive positions that ELA occupied in official and textual representations of its objectives and remit. I now move on to other forms of social practice: how adult members of the school (mostly Colombian and female) portrayed and perceived its purpose, how they reported language practices, and how children used language at school. This chapter seeks to address the following research question: How do language ideologies inform the ways in which Latino families are represented at Latin American school ELA? It therefore needs to be framed within the language ideological context described in Section 2.4.

This chapter starts by describing ELA’s ethnolinguistic project, which can be divided into three main objectives: language maintenance, cultural learning, and community building (Section 5.2). Next, it explores how the language practices and rationales of parents and children did not always match the project of the school, and were linked to evaluative discourses about linguistic choices and community members (Section 5.3). It does so by examining three ‘types’ of families who attended ELA: Latin American, mixed, and non-Latin American, before describing how unsuitable motives were ascribed to some families. The discussion then outlines how, in accordance with ethnolinguistic ideologies outlined in Chapter 2 and in ways similar to previous studies, ELA favoured an essentialised view of ethnicity as inherited and realised through language proficiency and orientation. In addition, it considers the presence of families whose profile did not correspond to the ethnolinguistic mission of the school, arguing that these non-Latin American families were erased in the discourse of the school for ethnopolitical reasons. Finally it argues that discourses signalling affiliation and disaffiliation with Latinos served to situate community members in a social hierarchy (Section 5.4).

5.2 ELA’s ethnolinguistic project

5.2.1 “Here we speak Spanish”

The main tenets of ELA's ethos were encapsulated in its promotional leaflet, which was also used as the basis for the school's website.⁶⁶ In the section entitled "**What is ELA?**", it stated that "**our fundamental purpose is to maintain our language (SPANISH) .**" Spanish was the only language used during public events (i.e., assembly, shows) and in written communications to families (i.e., letters and Christmas cards to parents). The staff always spoke Spanish together, whether informally or during meetings. They greeted pupils and their relatives in this language, and in the classroom, frequently reminded children that "**here we speak Spanish**" (e.g., Fieldnotes 13/06/09, 16/01/10). During one assembly, the director told families to speak Spanish and instructed children to do the same when they were playing together at ELA (Fieldnotes 28/02/08). During one of her workshops (on beneficial and harmful language practices), ELA's speech therapist declared that "**Here [at ELA] we do not speak any English**" (Fieldnotes 21/11/09).

The staff also believed that it was necessary for parents and children to speak Spanish together *outside the school*. During the workshop, the director asked parents, "**as a favour,**" to talk to their children in Spanish at home, emphasising that the child's first teacher is the parent. He spoke about his own case, claiming that his children addressed him in Spanish because they had always spoken Spanish at home. (Indeed, the three members of staff who had children at ELA stated categorically that Spanish was *the* language used at home.) He continued by saying that it was normal that there should be problems with language learning. He pointed out, jokingly, that he could not disapprove of other people's Spanish accent when his own English accent was so terrible, and imitated his children being embarrassed at his English ("oh daddy" – notice how the children expressed their embarrassment in English). Similarly, the speech therapist insisted on Spanish being the sole home language between parents and children.

Several months after I had left the school, the speech therapist came to my home one Sunday to seek help with her first MA assignment ("What defines good social research?"). I took the opportunity to enquire about her experience of dealing and working with families at ELA; during our conversation, she explained how bilingual families should clearly allocate each language to specific contexts:

⁶⁶ Almost a year after I had joined the school, the director gave me this leaflet and asked me to check it and give him feedback about any possible corrections ("**if something needs to be removed or is missing**") (Fieldnotes 30/01/10). The leaflet contained all the necessary practical information about the school so I did not suggest any additions. With regards to the aims of the school, I did not think that it was part of my role as participant-observer to have any editorial input into how the school represents and markets itself, so I suggested no revisions. Following his request, I translated the leaflet into English. Although he wanted me to adapt it so that it would sound 'more English,' this was difficult to do without changing his prose style. I deemed it better to render his words as faithfully as possible. Subsequently, I never witnessed him distribute English translations of the leaflet.

02.02 Sandra **that is what should happen with bilingual children
that is according to well theories
and many other things that I have read
they have to adapt to their situation
the language according to the situation
so if they are talking with the parents
they speak Spanish
they have to only speak Spanish
if they are talking well listening
at the English school to their English friends
they only speak in English
adapt to the situation⁶⁷**

02.22
Data extract 5.A Interview with Sandra (24/10/10)

Here Sandra was voicing a discourse circulated by other educational practitioners: that minority parents should only speak their language at home with their children, so that the children could grow up bilingual. Colombian mother Patricia was one of two parents at ELA who told me that educators had advised them to focus on speaking “their language” at home. She described how much her seven-year-old daughter enjoyed speaking Spanish:

0.34 Patricia **and she really likes Spanish *
for me it hasn't been difficult
teaching her *
it hasn't been difficult for me
Sophie and and she speaks English
Patricia she speaks English well
but at home I always try to do it
so that Spanish predominates
because at the English school
in a meeting we had
the teacher told us *
“we at the school
we take charge of English
and you as parents
you must take charge of your language *
and you are fortunate because
your children will speak two languages
so don't allow it to be lost”
01.21 so this is what happens at home**

Data extract 5.B Interview with Patricia (06/06/09)

The discourse according to which children are fortunate to be exposed to, and to develop the ability to speak, two (or more) languages was reiterated by various members of staff at ELA (Fieldnotes 20/06/09).

The benefits were believed to be oral and written. After I asked her whether she would be able to tell which language children spoke at home (without knowing anything about their

⁶⁷ All original Spanish versions of longer speech extracts can be found in Appendix D.

home background), teacher Luz replied that she would, because: **“the children who speak Spanish at home their level of Spanish is very good, generally, spoken ... it’s also very good written”** (Interview 15/10/10). Moreover the speech therapist believed that the benefits of speaking Spanish were not restricted to bilingual proficiency. According to her observations, they extended beyond ELA: **“their level of Spanish is good and even also the part their academic performance at the English school is also very good”** (Interview 24/10/10).

For the staff at ELA, it was important to speak Spanish at home *from the start*. This improved general proficiency as well as accent. A little later in our interview, I suggested to teacher Luz that while some children at ELA may be able to speak Spanish very well, they still retained a certain **“London rhythm.”** She agreed to some extent, citing the example of Ricardo, who had joined the school when he was four, and who retained **“more of an English rhythm”** (Interview 15/10/10). However she immediately contrasted him with another of her former pupils, Amalia, who spoke **“Spanish very naturally; you can tell that [she’s been speaking it] since she was very little.”** She concluded that:

43.30 Luz **if you pick it up as a kid
always totally it’s totally
as if you had been brought up over there *
that is I have realised
that the children who
who who speak Spanish best
then you talk with the parents
and the parents say that
“we have always spoken with them in Spanish”
and I don’t doubt it for a minute ***
43.52 **I don’t doubt it for a minute**
Data extract 5.C Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

Patricia was a good example of such parents and she was proud that her daughter had **“a paisa accent”** (Interview 06/06/09).⁶⁸ Clearly, the display of, not only a ‘native speaker’ accent, but an identifiable *regional* accent, was taken as an token of ethnolinguistic authenticity, in sharp contrast to the “English rhythm” of other children, which betrayed their inadequate linguistic upbringing. In short, as teacher Ángela’s praise of a couple of young parents makes clear (**“they are educating Sebastián well: Sebastián talks to you in Spanish”**, Interview 08/04/10), it was regarded as a sign of good parenting for Latin American parents to teach their child Spanish and to maintain it at home.

⁶⁸ The *paisa* region encompasses the department of Antioquia and the coffee-growing region known as the *Eje Cafetero*.

5.2.2 “It’s not a language, it’s a culture”

During the speech therapist’s workshop, the director stressed the importance of parents teaching their children Spanish, arguing vigorously that “**What we are giving them is not a language, it’s a culture**” (Fieldnotes 21/11/09). This culture was unquestionably Latin American and was perceived as different from the local one, as the school leaflet delineates:

It is clear to us that we live in another culture different from our own which affects directly the education and development of children and young people, therefore our fundamental purpose is to maintain our language (SPANISH), our music, dance, drama, painting and all the possible forms of communication that enable our Latin American children and young people to recreate or assimilate our culture with all the richness it contains.

Data extract 5.D ELA leaflet

In practice, “our culture” was transmitted in a number of ways. The school followed a sort of ‘Latin American calendar,’ in that it commemorated key dates, such as the *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead) and *Día de la Madre* (Mother’s Day) during assembly.⁶⁹ Typically, Euclides, the director, would provide some historical contextualisation and make a short speech about the occasion’s cultural or moral significance. In addition, teachers were encouraged to mark the occasion through a class activity. Most of these milestones corresponded to the Christian or Western calendar (e.g. Christmas, Spring), but some were not. For instance, this is how I recorded the marking of the *Día de la Raza* (Columbus Day, see Section 2.2.3) in my fieldnotes:

Assembly. Euclides speaks about the *Día de la Raza*, for which there is “**a big party to celebrate the discovery of America, in the whole of America.**” Talks about **Christopher Columbus**, the three **caravels**: Santa María, Pinta, Niña. Presentation by [a group]: 5 kids read a text, presumably written by Luz, about the discovery. Mobile phone rings very loudly; can’t hear what kids are saying. Diego [a volunteer] complains about parents not paying attention (“**something cultural**”); almost ashamed? Euclides talks about the **discovery** as “**a meeting of two cultures.**” “**We are a new stone, we are the future.**” Praises Latin America’s “**huge variety of plants, flora, many rivers, a lot of water ... water must be protected.**” Thanks the group for their “**poem on the discovery**” (which it wasn’t). A lot of parents talk over Euclides, glad to see each other again. ... Euclides [e]ncourages people to celebrate the *Día de la Raza*: “**I hope that you do it at home.**”

Data extract 5.E Fieldnotes (10/10/09)

⁶⁹ On the importance of Mother’s Day, Chant (2003:9) notes that “[t]here is absolutely no question that – in *mestizo* Latin America at least - motherhood has been both privately and publicly venerated, expressed in the forms of monuments or in vast and elaborate celebrations of ‘Mother’s Day’ which have tended to persist as a public exaltation of private, and often heavily essentialised, ‘female virtues.’”

The scene described here reveals some tensions between the institutional agenda and some of the parents' priorities. Assembly was a time when the director shared his reflections on inspirational matters (such as the syncretic nature and symbolic greatness of Latin America) and when the students, usually tongue-tied with stage fright, were asked to perform in public. Yet for some parents, the beginning of the school day was also a welcome opportunity to socialise. As a result, there was a conflict between the type of behaviour that the school demanded – respectful silence while a figure of authority is speaking – and that displayed by some parents. This was a repeated source of complaint at staff meetings; on one occasion the director tempered the heated discussion by reminding everyone of the type of people they were dealing with and to be realistic in their expectations (Fieldnotes 05/05/09). In the above vignette, volunteer Diego commented that it was “**something cultural**,” by which he seemed to refer to ‘bad manners’, hence a manifestation of ‘low culture.’ Similarly, after she had left the school for good, Colombian teacher Luz told me how she didn’t like that ELA projected a bad image. When I asked her what she meant, she gave the example of parents speaking during assembly, commenting that it wasn’t just poverty and bad manners in Colombia (Fieldnotes 11/06/11). Like her compatriot Diego, Luz objected to the fact that some of the parents acted in such a way as to give a negative image of Latin Americans (or Colombians); furthermore, her mention of “poverty” suggests that she associated their reprehensible behaviour with deprivation or lower class-ness (she was the only participant to identify explicitly as “**middle-class**” and spoke of some parents as being “**lower-class**,” Interview 15/10/10).

The school leaflet situated the “process of learning and cultural interaction” within a “Latin American perspective.” Certainly, the focus and curricular content of some activities was specifically Latin American. Identifying Latin American countries and capitals was a common exercise across age groups; younger children could often be seen showing maps of Central and South America or waving hand-made flags of Latin American nation-states at assembly (e.g., Fieldnotes 28/02/09, 27/03/10). In class, older children learnt about the discovery of Latin America (Fieldnotes 10/10/09) and its cultural heritage, including the world heritage site of Macchu Picchu (Fieldnotes 28/11/09). The dance and music teachers drew from a vast Latin American repertoire. At assembly, pupils presented traditional Latin American dishes, stories, and cultural practices, such as salsa (e.g., Fieldnotes 13/03/10, 29/05/10). There were also visual reminders of Latin American-ness. Children were encouraged to wear the school’s stock of ponchos and sombreros at special events. During end-of-term performances, three adult-sized paintings were placed on the stage; two of them were maps of Central and South America with ELA’s name, which looked like they had

been made by pupils. The third one depicted various symbols of Latin American natural and cultural heritage (see Plate 5.1). These end-of-term shows sometimes provided opportunities for the adults to take part in the celebration of popular Latin American culture, such as the time when, led by a music teacher, the audience clapped and sang along to the well-known song “*Un millón de amigos*” (Fieldnotes 04/04/09).

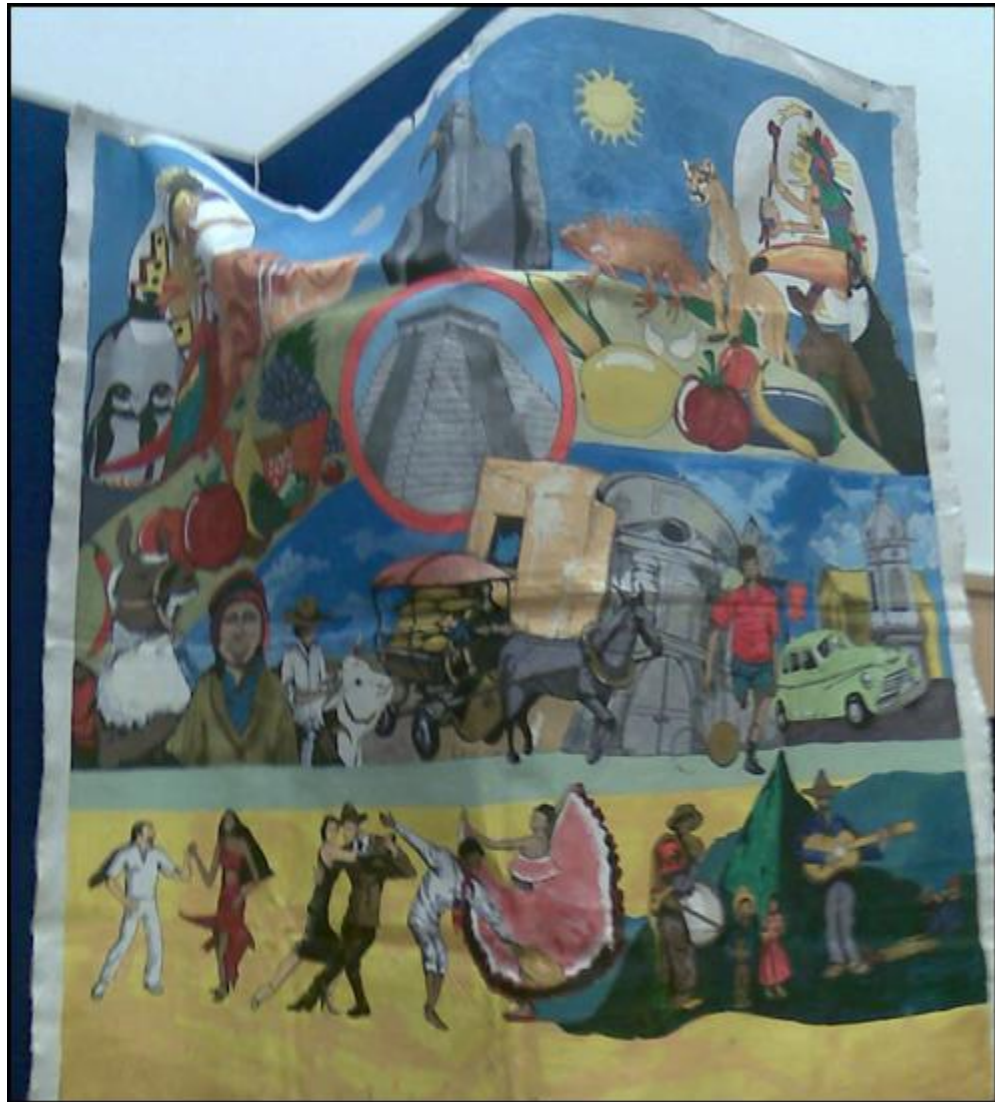


Plate 5.1 Panel depicting Latin American heritage at ELA

The school encouraged parents to engage in cultural learning, as teacher Luz illustrated during our interview. Since she covered “**a little of Latin American history and geography,**” she advised parents to get involved with the homework:

41.17 Luz so I told them that it would be great
if they could sit down with the kids
to do the reading so ()
and well if they could share
if they could complement the readings

41.26 **with what they knew and everything**
Data extract 5.F Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

She went on by reporting what one mother (with “**typical Latino features**” and “**real paísa accent,**” cf. footnote 67) had said about this ‘family homework’:

41.29 Luz **so she said ...**
 that it was really great
 what was going on
 because she was learning with the child as well
 but she did find it very difficult
 to complement [the reading]
 and that’s because

41.37 **“I am still learning it now”**
Data extract 5.G Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

Luz then described how surprised they (referring to herself and the other parents present) had been to hear this since, judging from the mother’s looks and accent, they had assumed that she came from Colombia. However, this lady revealed that because her parents had migrated to the UK, where she was born, and they had always lived here, she had never learnt this kind of thing. The mother had then remarked: “**I never had this opportunity that my son has had,**” thereby possibly expressing both regret for her lack of (complementary school) education and gratitude for her son’s. Luz was clearly fascinated by this case, as she would have sworn that this lady was a born-and-bred Colombian:

41.56 Luz **her Spanish is perfect**
 that is you can tell
 that they’ve always spoken Spanish at home
 but they haven’t shared many things beyond that
 you understand me in terms of culture
 in terms of geography history
42.08 **she didn’t know these things**

Data extract 5.H Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

For the director, this example would have emphasised the need of a school like ELA, which he saw as (a) imparting much more than just language, (b) being a vehicle for cultural maintenance, and (c) teaching parents as well as children.

5.2.3 Being with ‘your people’

Beyond maintaining Spanish and transmitting Latin American culture, ELA was concerned with instilling a feeling of togetherness among Latin American families. This was clearly expressed in its leaflet, where its “**Specific Aims**” were defined as:

To develop an educational project in search of:

- **Our Latin American roots.**
- **Our identity.**
- **Reinforcing our Latin being.**
- **Finding elements that we share.**
- **Generating a sense of community.**
- ...
- **Developing children's capacity for living together [*convivencia*] and interacting in a reality far away from our Latin American roots.**

Data extract 5.I ELA leaflet

Thus, ELA was designed as a place where young people of Latin American descent could meet, socialise, and find “elements that [they] share.” The idea that the children at ELA had significant things in common was indeed valued by some people. For example, shortly after her twelve-year-old daughter Cindy had joined the school, one mother told me at the parent/teacher meeting that she was pleased that Cindy was among young people like her. This is how I recorded our exchange in my fieldnotes:

I praise Cindy on her hard work in class and say that she seems to have integrated well, has friends. Mum agrees, is impressed by the new friendships. Thinks that it may be to do with the fact that she is surrounded by youngsters who are in the same situation as her: not fully English, not as established (“*arraigada* [deeply rooted]”) as English people, with a different background.

Data extract 5.J Fieldnotes (04/04/09)

Despite the fact that Cindy was born and bred in London, her mother described her “not fully English” and believed that it was a good thing for her to be among her ‘ethnic peers.’

Three of the former ELA students I spoke to displayed a similar sentiment. These young women, then aged twenty, shared several features. All three had all migrated from South America to London when they were children, with Spanish as their only language; they were now fluent bilinguals and identified as Colombian or Peruvian. They had attended ELA when it had first started and their mothers had taught at the school for several years. I first interviewed Monika and her twin sister Yesika at their home, where they lived with their mother, teacher Ángela. When I asked them to look back on their time at ELA, Monika reflected that she had enjoyed the feeling of being “at home” with fellow Colombians:

53.08 Sophie were were you naughty in in class
 or what was it like
 was it like secondary school
 Monika it was we had a lot more fun
 cos we were always talking and joking about and
 like like I dunno
 it just felt like for the first time ever like
 like English people are very conserving conservative
 and stuff like that

and that's what our friends were like
 but with Colombian people it was like well
 Yesika doesn't feel like that
 but I felt a bit more at home with them
 like it was a bit
 actually it was more easier to understand
 cos you have similar lifestyles
 you can talk about
 oh you know your parents did this
 and probably my our parents would have done it
 so we can you know
 make fun of that or whatever
 more similar lifestyles
 53.46 so we could talk more about it
 Data extract 5.K Interview with Monika and Yesika (12/08/09)

Her sister Yesika disagreed, claiming that the only difference between their mainstream girls' school and ELA was that, at the latter, they had been in a mixed environment. Despite this disparity of opinion, the sisters agreed on the impact that attending ELA had had on their social life and relationships:

55.15 Monika and definitely
 if we wouldn't have had that experience
 I know I wouldn't know an-
 I wouldn't really hang around with Latin people now
 I probably wouldn't have a Latin boyfriend
 55.22 I'd probably be with an English guy or something
 Data extract 5.L Interview with Monika and Yesika (12/08/09)

In sum, it seemed that their life was 'more Latin American' as a result of attending ELA.

I later interviewed Mandana with her mother, teacher Belén, as they were very close. When I asked Mandana whether she would send her (hypothetical) children to a complementary school, she responded:

81.36 Mandana **ah if I had children**
yes I think that it
schools erm like ELA
[are very important erm * and very necessary
 Sophie **[or a Latin American sch- yes**
 Mandana **because the child growing up here**
erm in a like in a society
that is erm English
it's another culture *
it's important that he maintains his roots
and this type of school
they don't only teach a language
they also teach what your culture is like
and what it's like erm
to live together with your people
so it's very important to unite the community too

**and so that the the new
the new generation that is coming
can maintain its identity also**

82.19

Data extract 5.M Interview with Mandana and Belén (20/11/09)

Mandana's answer echoes several ideas from the school's leaflet: it underlines the importance of (a) preserving "roots", (b) learning how to "live together with your people", (c) uniting the "community", and (d) maintaining group "identity." By contrast, when I asked Yesika and Monika whether they would send their child to a school like ELA, Monika replied that she would because she "[feels] scared that [her] kids are going to lose their Spanish" (Interview 12/08/09). Yesika, however, said that she would not, because "as long as they speak it at home, [she doesn't] want them to do another day of study" (ibid.). Here, Monika expressed fear of language loss, rather than concern for community unity and integration, as Mandana did. This difference of rationale needs to be contextualised within circumstantial differences (Ángela being absent; Belén being present), and different types of family engagement with community politics (for instance, Ángela was not active in the campaign for ethnic recognition, while Belén was, see Section 3.5.3).

Similarly, the motivations of Latin American parents could be more practical (language acquisition) than ideological (community unity). At a LAWRS dinner for its volunteers, I discovered that a LAWRS worker (from Argentina) had once sent her son to ELA. Her motivation for sending him to the school was for him to learn how to *write* in Spanish, as she and her Bolivian husband already maintained spoken Spanish at home. However, after about three or four Saturdays, they stopped going as her son did not enjoy it; she also mentioned that the school was very Colombian (Fieldnotes 10/06/11). During a subsequent interview, she explained that the problem was that they lived too far from ELA; she also found the school day too long and her son protested at having to study on a Saturday, thereby echoing Yesika's objection (see previous paragraph). As a result, she feared that **"he would end up hating the language ... because [she] was forcing him to do something that he did not want to do"** (Interview 22/07/11). This points to the potentially counterproductive impact of complementary schools; although, in this case, it needs to be tempered with the disclosure, later on in the interview, that her son did not like school at all.

Former students Monika, Yesika and Mandana had originally been brought up in Latin America by their Latin American family; consequently, they could be expected, *to a degree*, to display proficiency in Spanish and to identify as Latin American. At ELA, such students were in the minority. Most were born and bred in London; in addition, there were others whose parents had no ethnic connection to Latin America. In the next section, I consider how the different types of families coming to ELA were not always seen as behaving in a

way that fitted with the school's ethnolinguistic project, and how this could bring about complications.

5.3 Non-compliance and complications

5.3.1 Ascertaining family ethnicity

As I gradually noticed that not everyone was of Latin American descent at the school (cf. Section 3.4.2), I sought to ascertain the ethnic backgrounds of pupils, although this presented a number of difficulties. Attendance fluctuated a fair amount, so surveying pupils on a given Saturday could give an incomplete representation. To get an idea of the parents' origin, I consulted the forms completed during registration, although this approach was not wholly satisfactory.⁷⁰ I was only given limited access to the records, which were needed by school accountant Fernanda every time that a new child joined, and I did not have the opportunity to cross-check all the entries. Given the private information that these forms contained (e.g., name, address, medical conditions), I reassured Fernanda by telling her that I would only record the nationality of parents.

I examined a total of 137 forms in June 2010. From these, I identified three types of families: (Spanish-speaking) Latin American (55% of total), mixed families (32%), and non-(Spanish-speaking) Latin American families (13%). Although these figures are approximate, they give an idea of the heterogeneity of the school population. I now consider each type of family in turn.

5.3.2 Latin American families

Children's preference for English

⁷⁰ The records were not entirely reliable: some forms were missing, while others were no longer needed or had not been updated. Given the amount of student turnover at ELA, with many arriving mid-term and some children coming only once or twice, or irregularly, consulting these records gave an idea of the type of families who once registered, but not of the families who attended on a regular basis. In addition, the form asked for the *nationality*, not the *ethnicity(ies)*, of parents; this meant that those who only provided the nationality which they had acquired since migrating from Latin America (i.e., British, Spanish) would be erasing their Latin American ancestry. Nor did it account well for the second generation, hence British, parents who had grown up in Latin American families. In addition, the information about the father was not always completed, and the form did not reveal who the actual guardians were (possibly a grandparent). Finally, a form was needed for each child attending ELA, which meant that families with several children would be represented more than once in my assessment.

The majority of students belonged to families where both parents were of Latin American descent. Most of these families came from one country (predominantly Colombia, followed by Ecuador), but there were also some mixed couples (e.g., Bolivian & Colombian).

Despite the fact that Spanish was the official language at the school, pupils spoke almost exclusively English between themselves at ELA. They used it to exclaim distress or gratification, for messing around in the playground, chatting in the lunch queue, commenting on the task in language lessons, and for sharing gossip in the art classes. So prevalent was their use of English that I practically never heard a child speak Spanish spontaneously to another. Those who spoke Spanish together usually did so following the teacher's request; these were primarily girls. In the classroom, teachers expected pupils to respond and to participate in Spanish. When they heard children speak English, the teachers' response varied from annoyance and reprimand to weary reminders to speak Spanish; at other times, they did not comment on the children's choice of language and allowed them to continue speaking in English. In fact, many teachers used English themselves at times, but very briefly: to get the children's attention or to translate a word.

In sum, English was the default language among young people, while Spanish was used, unevenly and at times grudgingly, with adults. The following classroom scene illustrates this:

The girls are well-behaved, task-focused and chatting away amiably in English, seemingly ignoring the boys' brash behaviour. ... Paying no attention whatsoever to Heidy [a volunteer], Camilo's table are talking in English about technology: EBay, MSN, one wishing he had a mini laptop. Heidy does say something about speaking Spanish and Camilo translates his sentence into Spanish before switching back to English.

Data extract 5.N Fieldnotes (03/10/09)

Here, British-born Camilo, of Colombian parentage and fairly fluent in Spanish, was ready to make a momentary concession to the adult by translating what he had said into Spanish, but then reverted to the language that was most 'natural' with his friends. However, sometimes children refused to comply and carried on speaking English. In older groups, English was sometimes used to openly flout the classroom rules, as in this exchange between thirteen-year-old Gabriela and the young teacher, Ximena:

Ximena *¿Qué tal les fue la semana?*

[How did your week go?]

Gabriela Boring. Had to go to school.

Ximena *¿Vas a seguir con tu colegio el próximo año?*

[Are you going to carry on at the same school next year?]

Gabriela Maybe.

Data extract 5.O Fieldnotes (28/11/09)

Here Gabriela was being defiant, as she often was during the first year of fieldwork. As the director's daughter, she knew that she was expected to express herself in Spanish, yet she chose to resist this imposition from a teacher whom she did not like. Resistance could also be more playful than confrontational, as when Gabriela and Cindy purposefully mispronounced sounds when responding to the teacher (e.g., by anglicising vowels, as in saying “*lleno*” /*leno*/, meaning ‘full’, with a final diphthong /*lenəʊ*/) (Fieldnotes 24/10/09, 07/11/09). The majority of the time, I saw teachers address their British-born children in Spanish, while the latter responded in English; indeed, the dance teacher once observed at my home that “**those who speak the most English are the teachers’ children**” (Fieldnotes 20/06/10).

Thus, English seemed to be the language that young people were more comfortable with. Shortly after I had joined the school, I observed how a new pupil visibly relaxed when she heard the other children speak English:

[The director] has brought a very timid-looking girl, whom he introduces as Cindy. It's her first day. Everyone introduces themselves and we wish her welcome. ... Jessica immediately speaks to her in English and Cindy smiles as everyone speaks English together. So it feels like the tone is set in that respect: adults speak Spanish but young people speak English here.

Data extract 5.N Fieldnotes (07/03/09)

Nearly all the students from that class came from Latin American families and were fluent in Spanish, but they were also British-born and chose to speak English together. It seems that the young people's preference for English had always been part of how ELA operated. When I asked former students Yesika and Monika about their first day, they were unequivocal:

22.48 Sophie when you got there did the kids all speak English together or
 Monika yeah=
 Yesika =yeah we did
 Monika we all spoke it apart from when Euclides was there we spoke
 Yesika English=

22.57 Monika =all in English

Data extract 5.P Interview with Monika and Yesika (12/08/09)

Monika explained that, unless they were talking to someone who had just migrated from Latin America and therefore did not yet speak English well, if at all, the young people in her class only used English together, because “it was more normal to speak English” (ibid.).

Asymmetrical language choice

Contrary to what they explicitly recommended, the staff reported that the children's preference for English extended to the family home. In fact, the speech therapist believed that few children had managed to do the **"ideal thing"**, (i.e., to speak Spanish at home and English at school), and that **"the children at home, most of the time, they don't speak Spanish"** (Interview 24/10/10). Based on the time she had spent working with children and their parents, both at ELA and in some cases, in their homes, she concluded that the most frequent pattern was for the parents to speak Spanish and the children to speak English:

- 04.48 Sandra **the children in general
they speak in English
and the pa- the parents ask questions in Spanish
and they reply in Spanish
but the children speak in English
that is this is how I th-
that is it seems to me to be the rule**
- Sophie **uh hm
uh hm and what do you think of that**
- 05.06 Sandra **(3.0) no well that it shouldn't be like that**
- Data extract 5.Q Interview with Sandra (24/10/10)

In her experience, parents had got used to this arrangement and did not correct children or remind them to speak Spanish. When I asked her whether parents saw the fact that child replied to them in English as a failure, an inevitability, or something normal, she replied that **"the parents now see it as something normal."** However it would be erroneous to assume that "the parents" constituted a uniform entity, since there were reports that some parents adopted divergent stances. For example, British-born Jessica told me that, at home, her Colombian father spoke to his children in English, while her Peruvian mother insisted on speaking and being spoken to in Spanish (Fieldnotes 07/03/10).

While some parents acknowledged that this was not something to be proud of, they also highlighted the difficulty of raising children as competent Spanish speakers. During a candid parent/teacher meeting, a Colombian mother spoke of the difficulty of speaking Spanish to one's child. She described her ten-year-old daughter as someone who *"habla como una gringuita"* ("talks like a little gringa"), a self-deprecating comment that succeeded in making other people laugh (Fieldnotes 06/02/10).⁷¹ Her daughter did have an English accent and was far from fluent (Fieldnotes 13/06/09).

⁷¹ Mason Carris (2011:475) defines *gringa* as "a Spanish slang term used in Latin America and the USA to contemptuously refer to a racialised (white) female foreigner, characterised in particular by deficient proficiency in Spanish." However there exist contextual variations that underscore the relationality of the term. For example, during fieldwork, a Peruvian friend recounted how, during a professional visit to the Peruvian sierra, she had been dubbed '*gringa*' by the local inhabitants. In her case, the term was not predicated on her foreignness or her deficient proficiency of Spanish, since she was a born-and-bred Peruvian who had always spoken Spanish. However the term still underlined her

There were some success stories. In one instance, teacher Luz told me about how two Colombian parents had been dedicated to teaching their daughter Spanish, by spending a lot of time with her and reading her stories in Spanish. Eight-year-old Amalia was also one of the rare children I observed speak Spanish spontaneously (Fieldnotes 13/06/09, 24/10/09), which could suggest that home literacy in Spanish was instrumental in the development of both her proficiency and enjoyment of Spanish.⁷² Then, I asked Luz about parents who had not found this so easy, and she vividly recounted the experiences of parents who had found it difficult to establish Spanish as the prevailing home language:

- 44.18 Sophie **and are there parents
who have told you that
that they find it difficult
to speak Spanish at home
they find it easier to speak English or not**
- Luz **no but not that they speak
rather that they don't force their children to speak *
that is that they tell me
and there's lots of them
when their children's Spanish isn't very good
I tell them:
"listen blah blah blah
look what do you speak with them
in Spanish"
they tell me:
"no Miss I always speak to my child in Spanish"
and I believe them
because you speak to the child
the child understands everything you say *
"but it's just that the child answers me in English
and look I'm so tired
there's no time
and while I'm telling him to speak to me in English"⁷³
you have to do the homework
you have to go and eat
you have to go to bed
and it's already late
well I let him answer me in English
and then I (?) speak to him in Spanish
and he answers in English"**
- 45.03 **and that's what they do**

Data extract 5.R Interview with Luz (Interview 15/10/10)

phenotypical and linguistic otherness as it drew attention to the fact that she was much fairer than them and was unable to speak the local indigenous language Quechua.

⁷² This would support the school's drive to improve Spanish literacy, which was visible in (a) the recurrent reminders by teachers to parents to read to and with their children, (b) the setting up of a "*biblioteca viajera*" (mobile library or book exchange), which had mixed success, and (c) The director's invitation to parents to read stories at assembly (Fieldnotes 03/10/09, 07/11/09, 20/03/10).

⁷³ Here Luz obviously meant 'Spanish'; this confusion between languages happened occasionally in the interviews I recorded.

Luz also spoke of a mother who had struggled with her child's linguistic and cognitive development as a whole. During my observations, this boy, Ricardo, had come across as one of the least fluent and diligent in the class. Luz described how Ricardo's mother had told her that she had found bringing up her (British-born) child in London a very lonely and confounding process: **"you're all alone, Luz, all alone; you don't know what to do."** Without a family network to support her, and with both her and her husband working all the time, she had dedicated little time to her son: **"you get home very tired after work and working all the time and I had left him very, very abandoned in that sense."** Luz recalled how Ricardo had been the pupil who was the most behind when he first joined the school, both in terms of Spanish and learning in general. His mother felt deep remorse for having left him **"all alone"**: **"if I had offered him more stimulation, if I had worried about him more, he wouldn't have the [learning] problems he has now."** Luz commented that the mother's pain had been **"terrible."**

This depiction of Latin American families – forced by socioeconomic pressures to work very long hours, which in turn impact negatively on their children – was one of the most recurrent narratives heard throughout fieldwork, both at and outside ELA. On the first occasion that I saw teacher Ángela outside of school, she insisted on taking me and her daughters to a restaurant. There, she recounted that when she was bringing up her children, it had been very important for her not to work too much so that she could take them to school and spend a lot of time with them. She commented that for some Latino families,

it's very difficult because the parents work very hard, maybe have an evening shift, so they don't spend much time with their children, don't help them with homework.

Data extract 5.S Fieldnotes (07/08/09)

Similarly, when describing childrearing in her family, Colombian mother Patricia said that she had witnessed how challenging the situation was for her older siblings and for Latin American parents in general, commenting that she had **"seen many cases of people who have to leave their children on their own because they have to go to work"** (Interview 06/06/09). Some of the social difficulties and structural inequalities associated with (low-income) migration become apparent here: family separation – and hence loss of a supportive network to share childcare with – and long, tiring hours create substantial obstacles to confident parenting and successful language maintenance. In such cases, the complementary school can play an important role as it supports or even substitutes the home in inculcating the minority language.

If there was some sympathetic justification for why parents may come to neglect their children's linguistic development or surrender to their predilection for English, there was

also concern about the repercussions of a mixed orientation to English and Spanish at home. Although she acknowledged that the fact that parents spoke Spanish while their children spoke English did not apparently disturb the day-to-day functioning of the family, the speech therapist argued that parents did not realise what might happen in the future. She feared that when they had grown up, the children would express themselves in English, which the parents might not understand, and wondered “**what will the relationship between them be like**” (Interview 24/10/10). Here she was concerned that speaking separate languages might limit emotional communication and stunt family relationships, thereby reproducing the discourse of ‘the intergenerational language gap’ (cf. Section 4.3.3), according to which imbalances in language proficiency lead to breakdowns in communication and family cohesion. Again, this was a discourse voiced on several occasions during fieldwork.

Mixing Spanish and English

I heard few examples of adults mixing Spanish and English; these were principally nonce borrowings, that is, the inclusion of a single word from another language, such as the word ‘teenager’ incorporated into Spanish speech.⁷⁴ However, the more systematic mixing of languages attracted criticism.

Shortly after she had been talking about how parents oriented towards Spanish and children towards English, teacher Luz told me how she had realised that some families spoke a mixture of both languages. At a parent/teacher meeting, a father had told her that his child “**mixes**” (“*me habla combinado*”), so she had asked the child what he spoke at home. He had replied “**Spanish and English.**” I asked her what she thought of this and she exclaimed “**no, well, it’s terrible because you don’t speak Spanish or English and you speak a mixture of both.**” Luz argued that mixing was detrimental because, while adults were able to distinguish between languages according to the situation, children were not, and would it find more difficult, for instance, to switch wholly to Spanish once they were in Colombia or Ecuador (Interview 15/10/10).

Colombian mother Patricia gave a good illustration of how mixing languages could occur quite ‘naturally’ in the family home. When I asked her whether she knew cases of children who did not speak any Spanish, she responded by telling me about her niece, Manuela, who had started attending ELA from an early age and was now in the oldest group:

⁷⁴ The way that three Spanish-speaking parents (respectively of Colombian and Spanish origin) used the word ‘teenager’ conveyed particular qualities, such as petulance and sullenness. One father, for example, described his relationship with his daughter as being a bit difficult: “*es una teenager... [tiene] actitud de rebeldía*”) (“she is a teenager ... [she’s acting] like a rebel”) (Fieldnotes 27/03/10).

02.52 Patricia **I tell you about Manuela's case
Manuela before she came here
and my sister made a big big mistake
what happened was that
at home er my sister would speak to her in Spanish
Manuela would understand
but she would reply in English *
or my sister would speak to her partly in Spanish *
and partly in English *
Spanglish
so I would tell her ()
"this is not good
either she speaks English
03.28 or she speaks Spanish" ***
Data extract 5.T Interview with Patricia (06/06/09)

She carried on by describing how her daughter was now also starting to mix Spanish and English. Like Luz, Patricia condemned the use of Spanglish; she reported that she threatened her daughter by saying: **"so when you speak to me in Spanish and half English, I'm not going to look at you; either you speak to me in English or you speak to me in Spanish"** (ibid.).

At the same time, the teachers who denounced the mixing of languages also recognized that, as the speech therapist put it after inserting an English word in her sentence, **"it's something that we Latin Americans do a lot"** (Fieldnotes 20/06/09). Similarly, Luz disapproved strongly of mixing, but later revealed that she did it herself. This made her feel uncomfortable: **"I don't like speaking Span-English ("espanenglish"). I like to speak Spanish and to speak English but not both ... but I tend to mix."** Despite the fact that she acknowledged that it occurred spontaneously, she believed that **"it's a very bad habit to mix"** (Interview 15/10/10).⁷⁵

Parents' orientation to English

To the dismay of members of the school, there were Latin American parents who addressed their children in English. At a teacher/parent meeting, a father shared his concern, remarking that **"I have noticed many parents who speak to them in English."** Teacher Belén responded by expressing amazement at the situation whereby **"there are children**

⁷⁵ Luz and Sandra were the only two members of staff whom I heard express strong disapproval of mixing languages (which does not mean that they were the only ones to hold such views). Both women shared several characteristics: they were Colombian graduates, in their mid- to late twenties, who had come to the UK three or four years previously to learn English and do a Masters degree. In addition, they were the only members of staff who were not also parents, and who therefore had not brought up children in a bilingual context.

who incredibly have two Latin American parents but [don't] speak Spanish! They understand but they don't speak it" (Fieldnotes 03/10/09).

Colombian mother Patricia believed that this was common among the Latin American community in London: **"the majority of Latino kids, I see that the parents make that mistake"** (Interview 06/06/09). As an example, she cited the case of her sister-in-law's family, where **"they only speak English and the parents, both my sister-in-law and her husband, are Latinos, they are Colombian."** As a result, the children did not speak well: **"they don't speak Spanish fluently; their Spanish is all muddled up"** (ibid.).

I came across other instances where the decision by a Latin American parent to speak English to his or her child provoked strong disapproval. For example, teacher Belén once told a Colombian grandmother that it was necessary to use Spanish with her six-year-old granddaughters (whose could neither understand nor speak much Spanish). The grandmother could not agree more but blamed her daughter for only speaking English to them. I asked her why this was; she replied that her daughter had become used to only speaking English to them, even though, she exclaimed indignantly, her daughter was Colombian (Fieldnotes 23/01/10). Similarly, while talking about Latin American families who did not encourage Spanish at home, teacher Ángela once exclaimed that **"there are parents who don't care that their children don't speak their language!"** (Fieldnotes 23/10/10). Seven months before, while we were talking about the proportion of her pupils who came from Spanish-speaking homes, she had described such Latin American families:

40.53 Ángela **there are two families there
and especially one
that are Ecuadorian ()
and they speak to their child in English
to Mauricio for example
Mauricio doesn't doesn't speak to me in Spanish *
but the thing is that the-
in the meeting
the dad answered me some things in English**
41.13 **typical Ecuadorian**
Data extract 5.U Interview with Ángela (08/04/10)

Ángela was scathing of the fact that both the child and the father spoke to her in English. Her outburst ("typical Ecuadorian") was one of the rare occasions when a Latin American participant expressed a pejorative view of nationals from another Latin American country in front of me (most of these instances will be examined in Sections 6.4, 6.5).⁷⁶ Ángela went on

⁷⁶ On this occasion, Colombian-born Ángela's criticism may need to be contextualised within local ideologies. Ángela's daughters told me that some Colombians felt superior to Ecuadorians, an attitude exemplified in the fact Colombians make fun of the Ecuadorian accent and that of the *pastusos*, the

by describing the father with some disgust: “dressed like an American (*“todo americanizado”*), like a cap and that’s how he dresses Mauricio” (ibid.). In this case it would seem that Ángela disapproved of the father’s preference for Anglo culture, shown through language orientation and clothing. I observed that, when he officiated as the ‘Latin DJ’ during school celebrations, his extra large clothing (which indexes Black hip hop culture but has now been commoditised and appropriated by other groups) made him stand out among other more conventionally dressed parents.

The director, Euclides, had his own interpretation of the preference of some Latin Americans for English. On the day that Ángela commented on parents who “**don’t care,**” I had gone back to ELA to ask the director about a mention he had made, eighteen months before, about Latin American parents being “**ashamed of speaking Spanish.**” Beyond writing down his formulation verbatim, I had not written any explanations in my notes. So, after we had discussed how to take the website forward with the web designer, I asked Euclides what he had meant. He then described the case of two families where the parents did not speak Spanish to their children. The Peruvian family had acquired a Spanish passport (which gave them a very high status) and felt English and European, rather than Latin American; they looked down on Latin American people and did not want to talk to them. In the Colombian family, the parents spoke English – badly – between themselves. Their daughter had attended ELA until she was about ten but now, aged sixteen, she had forgotten how to speak Spanish. When the grandmother had come to visit from Latin America, she had ended up staying with Euclides; she could not communicate with her grandchildren nor could she understand “**how all of them born and bred in Colombia do not speak Spanish anymore.**” Euclides’ analysis was that this orientation to English was both pragmatic (there was no need to speak Spanish because English was the language spoken here in the UK) and ideological (it signalled disregard for and rejection of their *latinidad*). Thus, he interpreted their decision as a “**denial**” of their language, their culture, and even of “**our [Latin American] being**” (*“nuestro ser”*). For him, this “**individual uprooting of their being with regards to their origin**” was symptomatic of a “**cultural problem**” which was linked to a “**race complex.**” He attributed this to a lack of education (“**an educated person doesn’t do this**”) and mentioned a study which had found that, in the vast majority of cases where Latin

inhabitants of a region bordering Colombia and Ecuador, both seen as indexing something akin to peasant stupidity. In my fieldnotes, I recorded that “They tell me about Colombians and Ecuadorians and how many Colombians in London feel superior to Ecuadorians, whom they consider to be “*meme*”, more Indian or more stupid, depending on your interpretation of the term (which they disagree about). Monika speaks passionately about how she lost friends when she started going out with [her boyfriend] because he is Ecuadorian. ... They tell me about how there are a lot of jokes about the people from Pasto, who live close to Ecuador. Some Colombians feel they are the most attractive people, the best race in Latin America” (Fieldnotes 08/04/10).

American children did not speak Spanish, the mother “**did not have a high academic level**” and had not completed compulsory education (Fieldnotes 23/10/10).

Another of his observations was that such parents could be proud of the fact that their child did not speak Spanish: “**they arrive in Colombia saying “my child is English” ... they want to show off**” (ibid.). Similarly, Colombian mother Patricia claimed that, far from being ashamed, some parents would be “**100% proud**” that people would notice that their child spoke with a foreign accent or could speak little Spanish, when they went back to Latin America, because of the high status of destinations like England and the USA (Interview 06/06/09). She too associated the admiration of Colombians for English and countries such as England with “**a certain ignorance**” and gave several examples of the boastful and ostentatious behaviour of migrants when they returned to Latin America (ibid.).

5.3.3 Mixed families

About one third of the registration forms I surveyed corresponded to mixed parentage. In other words, one parent was a Latin American national, while the other was not: e.g. Bolivian and Bangladeshi, or Colombian and Cypriot.

This state of affairs made decisions regarding home language choice potentially more difficult than for ‘fully’ Latin American families. Would the parents opt for one home language that everyone could understand (more likely to be English), or would they try to maintain the language of both parents? In the latter case, the choice of language could be exclusionary if one parent could not understand or speak their partner’s language. In families where both parents spoke a language other than English, the exposure to three languages was not necessarily easy to manage for parents. At the speech therapist’s workshop, an Ecuadorian father explained that his five-year-old daughter communicated in Polish with her Polish mother, but he lamented the fact that she did not speak to him in Spanish, which provoked sympathy and laughter from other parents (Fieldnotes 21/11/09). As a result, he was bringing his daughter to ELA to encourage her to speak Spanish at home.

For some parents, home language orientation was clearly a sensitive issue. During the registration of a new child, school accountant Fernanda asked the little girl her name and age in Spanish, commenting afterwards that “**she speaks Spanish well.**” Her Colombian father retorted, in Spanish, that she did not speak Spanish well, because her mother could not speak Spanish. Fernanda then turned to the Irish mother, asking her, in English, whether she spoke any Spanish. The mother went on the offensive, blaming the father for the fact that their daughter did not speak his language, saying that “he should have spoken to her [in Spanish] from the start” (Fieldnotes 26/09/09). In other instances, blame and recrimination about

whose responsibility it was to ensure that the child was bilingual gave way to guilt and admission of struggle. A Chilean father, married to an Englishwoman, was striving to speak to his teenage son in Spanish but found this difficult, as he explained to me during a parent/teacher meeting:

He seems genuinely concerned that his son should be able to progress in Spanish. He also explains that it's tough for him to speak in Spanish to his son since he's so used to speaking English all the time, in his job and at home. Always spoke in English to his son.

Data extract 5.V Fieldnotes (04/04/09)

In all three cases, the Latin American parent's desire for their child to speak Spanish encountered emotionally loaded obstacles, in the form of family decisions about language orientation at home.

5.3.4 Non-Latin American families

To varying degrees, the families examined until now could be expected to send their children to ELA so that they could learn about '*their*' community language, culture, heritage, and to give them an opportunity to be among '*their*' people. However there were also a few youngsters who came from families with no ethnic affiliation to Latin America. Spanish mother Jackeline, for instance, had been approached by the school accountant at their children's primary school. She had not planned to send her British-born daughters to a Spanish-speaking school and felt no compunction about speaking to them in English "**out of habit.**" She agreed to try out ELA and had since been coming "**every Saturday religiously**". She was definitely one of the most 'faithful' of parents, arriving early and leaving late to help with setting and clearing up; she spoke very warmly of the school. When I asked her about the ethnic dimension of ELA, she paused and then said that her daughters were learning Latin American words that were not used in Spain but this did not "**worry**" her. When I asked her if there was a difference between a Spanish and a Latin American school, she replied that she could not comment, not having been to a Spanish (complementary) school. At any rate, she said that she was not interested in seeking a Spanish school; she valued ELA for its arts classes, the organisation of the school day, and for the fact that it prepared students for the GCSE Spanish exam (Interview 05/12/09).

It seemed that for non Latin American parents, the ethnocultural project of the school was not of great importance. When I asked the Iranian parents of five-year old Nazanin why they were sending her to ELA, they explained that they wanted her to learn Spanish, given that she would be studying French from Year 2 or 3 at primary school (Fieldnotes 07/11/09).

Following our brief conversation on their choice of a *Latin American* school, I recorded these observations:

It's clear from what the mum says that ... the Latin American dimension has no relevance whatsoever; in fact, it's almost as if she is not aware that it's a Latin American school. The school was recommended by a Colombian friend whose husband is Iranian. ... When I press the Latin American question, there is a misunderstanding and Nazanin's mum asks me whether I know any other Spanish school nearer where they live, in North Finchley. She seems completely uninterested in the supposed cultural / ethnic aspect of the school.

Data extract 5.W Fieldnotes (07/11/09)

Most non-Latin American children were aged 3 to 6; their parents seemed primarily interested in them being exposed to Spanish. These very young children were not necessarily at a disadvantage in class. Teacher Ángela explained that what was most important, was for the parents to support the child's learning at home, by helping with homework and providing other opportunities for Spanish maintenance during the week (Interview 08/04/10). In some cases, the non-Latin American children performed even better than their Latin American peers. According to teacher Ángela, Jack (whose parents were of South African / British origin) spoke **"Spanish really well,"** even better **"than Mauricio, who is Ecuadorian,"** and **"whose dad and whose mum [are] Ecuadorian and the grandmother and everything"** (Interview 08/04/10). Whereas Mauricio's Ecuadorian family oriented to English, Jack's South African / British family was keen to learn and to practise Spanish.

However, enthusiasm for the language did not ensure complete integration into the school and the fact that some parents could speak basic or no Spanish could cause problems. On several occasions, Ángela found herself struggling with the conflicting demands of parents: those who could not understand Spanish expected her to explain the homework and whole-school announcements in English (given that all public communications were in Spanish), while some Latin American parents resented the fact that Ángela spoke English in class. One Ecuadorian mother even complained to the director about this, so Ángela would try and circumvent this by asking me or parents to act as interpreters. On one stressful morning, she asked two Iranian mothers chatting together to leave the classroom if they were not speaking Spanish; they left (Fieldnotes 11/07/09). On another occasion, as a result of not understanding a letter to parents (written in Spanish) and thus not bringing a Christmas present for her son as had been requested, Jack's mum became quite tearful and angry at Ángela (Fieldnotes 05/12/09, Interview 08/04/10). During the teachers' planning day, Ángela brought up the issue of communication with non-Latin American parents to the director's attention, but he ignored it (Fieldnotes 05/09/09).

Although in the minority, the case of families who displayed no knowledge of Spanish could generate some unease. On a September morning, a South Korean mother rushed in to drop off her child for the first time. As she could not understand Spanish, she was unable to fill in the registration form. Eventually,

[Colombian father] Álvaro comes and offers to help. He obviously knows the Korean mum (maybe he recommended the school?) and translates the form [into English] for her. After the mum leaves, he shares his discomfort with Fernanda: the little girl doesn't speak or understand any Spanish and in that class, [she] will be with kids who do. Fernanda doesn't seem bothered; lays the responsibility with the teachers as to what group she should be in.

Data extract 5.X Fieldnotes (26/09/09)

Given the apparent lack of linguistic interest or proficiency of this parent, the question arises as to why she would want to send her child to ELA. I obtained a possible answer to this question when I returned to the school for its end-of-year and tenth anniversary celebrations, in July 2011 (cf. Figure 5.1).

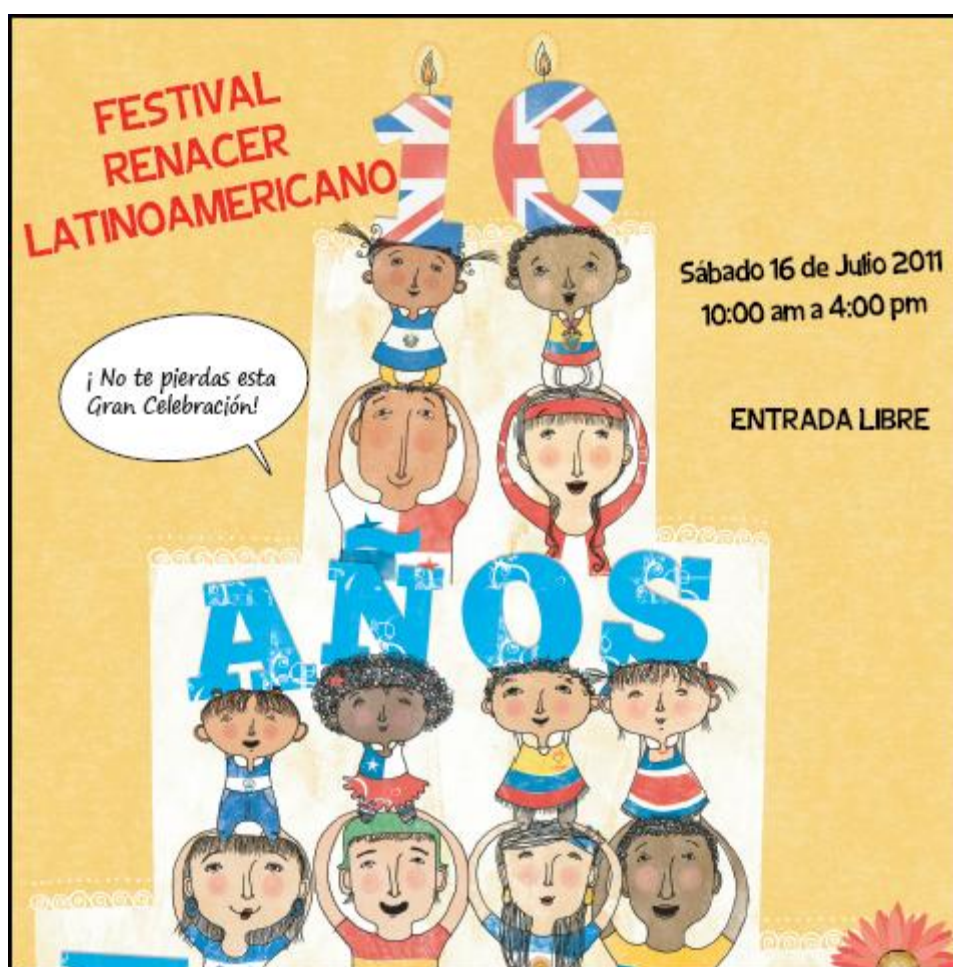


Figure 5.1 Invitation to ELA's tenth anniversary celebrations⁷⁷

In what had been Ángela's group, I was told that there were three non-Latin American children. I spoke to the mother of one of these children, Nicholas, then aged four. She was Irish, while her husband was Chinese. When I asked her "what was your motivation for bringing your child here?", her reply was succinct: "giving birth." She explained that when she gave birth to her second child, another (Colombian) mother at Nicholas' day care centre recommended ELA. Thus, she was able to leave her son at ELA for the day, which gave her much needed time. I asked her if it could have been any kind of school, like French for example. She replied "yes, anything." She later claimed that she had been motivated by the desire for Nicholas to learn a language, although this seemed secondary to the childcare rationale (Fieldnotes 16/07/11).

During this final visit, the diversity of the student population was reflected in the posters produced by teacher Belén's group. Whereas I suspect that she had hoped for posters that proclaimed messages such as **"I love you Colombia. Country of beautiful people,"** there were also posters that offered an alternative to the celebration of Latin America, such as the one stating **"I love you my Italy. I love you pasta."** While I was helping Belén, I saw that there were seven posters for Colombia, two for Peru, two for Bolivia, one for Trinidad, one for Spain, one for Italy, and one for Palestine (16/07/11).

Nevertheless this degree of (ethnic) inclusivity did not mean that there was complete acceptance of all parental reasons for sending their child to the school, so, in the final section, I describe how the staff attributed 'unsuitable' motives to some parents.

5.3.5 Unsuitable motives

Although in the case of the Korean child described above, the school accountant had not shared Colombian father Álvaro's concern and was ready to register the new child, she also expressed criticism of parents who used ELA as a babysitter. When I once suggested to her that there were many reasons why parents sent their children to ELA, she agreed, saying that some used it only as a cheap childminding service and that not everyone was interested in the language teaching (Fieldnotes 20/06/09). Likewise, teacher Ángela thought that **"a lot of [parents] want [their children] to spend the day there and they go so that they can leave them for a bit"** (Interview 08/04/10), which her daughter Yesika agreed with: "I've

⁷⁷ Translation: "Latin American reawakening/revival festival. Don't miss this great celebration! Saturday 16th of July. 10 years. Free entry."

gone to help my mum and I partly feel like a lot of parents do it cos it's another day to get rid of their kids, that's what I really truly feel" (Interview 12/08/09).

ELA could be seen as an attractive childcare option: it offered a centrally located space where children could be stimulated, socialised, and exposed to Spanish for only £5 or £10/day. This tariff was cheap compared to nearby nurseries.⁷⁸ This low cost would explain why a British father once told me that, when he found out how much ELA charged parents, he could not believe it and thought that they had forgotten a digit (Fieldnotes 27/03/10). Potentially using ELA as a convenient and enhanced babysitter was not restricted to non-Latin American families. At a training day, teacher Luz remarked disparagingly that Latin American parents **"leave their children so that they can work [more]"** (Fieldnotes 05/09/09). However, a year later, she voiced a different view:

23.32 Luz **also I've realised that
that is the Latin American people
who are here
a lot of people work very hard
very hard
and these people work hard for their family
for their children
they don't work for anything else
so sometimes one may judge
and say that they are not interested
that blah blah blah
but sometimes it's not that
maybe it's that
they do care too much
that's why they are working
only for [their children]**

23.53
Data extract 5.Y Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

Luz's alternately reproachful and sympathetic stance reflected the overall discourse of the staff, who blamed the incompetence of some Latin American families (e.g., arriving late, not paying on time, not supporting Spanish maintenance at home), while also expressing understanding of their difficult circumstances (e.g., working long hours, not knowing how the education system works).

5.4 Discussion

5.4.1 Language and ethnicity in a complementary school

⁷⁸ Locally, prices ranged from £19-43/day of supervised playing and learning, but this was on the basis of regular attendance (3-5 days/week). In addition, a Montessori school charged a premium for its dance, music, and foreign language classes.

The first set of findings is broadly consonant with the language ideology and the complementary school literatures, in three main aspects. Firstly, at ELA, the dominant discourse was based on an essentialised conception of ethnicity as inherited and strongly tied to language proficiency. The Spanish language was portrayed as an iconic representation of *latinidad*, which reflected a common process in complementary schools. According to Irvine & Gal (2000:37), “iconization” occurs when “[l]inguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them, as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a social group’s inherent nature of essence.” Following this ethnolinguistic linkage, Spanish was idealised as the heritage and home language, just as the minority language is described as the “mother-tongue” in other studies (e.g. Francis et al. 2009:521; Creese et al. 2006:34; Walters 2010:6). Secondly, ELA was also comparable to other complementary schools in that students overwhelmingly signalled a preference for English in their language practices (e.g. Archer et al. 2009:480; Çavuşoğlu 2010:135; Walters 2010:11). However in this study it was notable that the dominant discourse prescribed a rigid deployment of codes within the verbal repertoire of Latin American Londoners. Thus Spanish was expected to be the language spoken at ELA and within the family home – in other words, with fellow Latin Americans. The orientation to English in these domains was perceived as disaffiliative and potentially as a sign of parental failure. This disjuncture (predictable, given the prevalence of mixing among bilinguals, cf. Section 2.4.2) between the official discourse and the everyday practices of speakers illustrated the difficult task of the school, where “students are expected to be learning their ‘mother-tongue’, which is paradoxically a second language for many of them” (Martin et al. 2006:6). Although ELA teachers occasionally incorporated the odd English word in their classroom speech, language was mostly distributed asymmetrically with teachers favouring Spanish and students favouring English. By contrast, in some other studies, the coexistence of English with the minority language appears to have been more prevalent or normalised (cf. Blackledge et al. 2008; Martin et al. 2006:17-18). As a result, these data differ from those of other studies in that they expose a strongly purist ideology which rejects hybrid practices such as Spanglish, in line with dominant language ideologies about language mixing. (This is not to say that such ideologies are not prevalent in other complementary schools, but rather that they have not been equally accounted for in the literature.) The condemnation of Spanglish reflected the symbolic violence effected by monolingual ideologies: speakers both recognised that it occurred ‘naturally,’ spontaneously, yet criticised it, even chastising themselves for producing it. In sum, accounts from the ELA community suggest that “parallel monolingualisms” (Heller 2006:34) were difficult to enforce, both at school and in the home. Thirdly, ELA was similar to other complementary schools in that the motivations

of parents and students went beyond ethnocultural considerations, and were also focused on the instrumental value of Spanish in the education system and job market (cf. Creese et al. 2006:35; Francis et al. 2009:524-527; Walters 2010:8). Thus, learning Spanish at ELA was seen as bringing linguistic capital and, by extension, institutionalised cultural capital through the acquisition of Spanish GCSE and A Level qualifications.

Lastly these findings differ from some of the literature in that the co-existence of different varieties of Spanish was unproblematic and did not lead to hierarchisation, unlike the case of, e.g., Hakka/Cantonese/Putonghua in Francis et al. (2009:521) or Sylheti/Bengali in Blackledge & Creese (2010:Chapters 8, 9) and Walters (2010:7-8).

The second set of findings relates to an issue that has mostly been overlooked in previous studies – that of the presence of children and parents who do not correspond to the ethnolinguistic target community of the school. At ELA about 45% of children registered were found to come from families that were either mixed or non-Latin American. By contrast, most of the literature gives the impression that complementary schools constitute communities that are, largely, ethnically uniform (e.g. Blackledge & Creese 2010; Francis et al. 2006, 2009; Walters 2010). One exception is a London Turkish complementary school where, according to the headteacher, “while ten years ago one would find only one or two children from mixed ethnic and racial backgrounds in [the school], now there were more than ten young people from mixed backgrounds in one classroom” (Çavuşoğlu 2010:239). Having turned down the request of a non-Turkish-speaking parent (to register her child at the school), the headteacher also commented that he could not understand why “people with no Turkish background” would want to send their children to a Turkish complementary school (ibid, p.240). Acknowledging the ongoing changes in the demographics of Turkish complementary schools, Çavuşoğlu (ibid.) concludes that “these developments and complementary schools’ responses to them are important research areas that need to be explored further.” Previously Hall et al. (2002), Reay & Mirza (1997), and Mirza & Reay (2000) had mentioned the presence of a few children whose ethnicity did not correspond to the ethnolinguistic project of the school, but did not investigate the families’ rationale for sending them there, or how their presence was managed by the school. The only study I found that addressed these questions rigorously was Dacosta’s (1987) doctoral thesis – a four-year-long ethnographic study of ideology and practice within the Black supplementary school movement. Like Reay & Mirza (1997) he observed the presence of non-Black children in Black supplementary schools. Admittedly, ethnic mixing in a global city is hardly a remarkable event, but it can have repercussions for the stated mission of the school. Dacosta provides an example of this when he describes some of the discussions that took

place regarding the establishment of an Association of Black Supplementary Schools. One of the issues raised was whether they should be called “black supplementary schools.” The Nigerian head of a supplementary school in North London “would not agree to the use of the term ‘black’ for the supplementary schools and the Association” and as a result of this disagreement, he ceased to attend the committee’s meetings (p.168). The reason for this was that because his school welcomed children who were Afro-Caribbean and Asian, as well as a small number of Whites, “there was no way he could argue that the school was in essence a ‘black’ supplementary school” (ibid.). What is interesting is that, for this headteacher, the mixed ethnicity of his cohort invalidated the stated ideological affiliation of the school (Black). Had ELA’s director followed a similar line of reasoning, then the school may have ceased to be called ‘Latin American.’

Dacosta classified this headteacher as being part of what he called “the Pragmatists,” as opposed to the “Radicals” (pp.167-8). Indeed, the label of ‘pragmatist’ could be applied to ELA’s director, insofar as the school had an ethnically and linguistically inclusive policy, which reflected “pluralist pragmatism” (Heller 2006:213). By marketing itself as a language school (cf. Section 4.4.3), ELA operated as a provider of de-ethnicised cultural and linguistic capital available to all. In turn the presence of children from a range of ethnic backgrounds marks ELA as the product of a super-diverse global city ethnoscape, where language practices could be deterritorialised and commodified.⁷⁹ However the prioritisation of the “economics of language” (Heller 2006:213), at the expense of the ethnolinguistic mission of the school (cf. school leaflet) was not without problems. For instance, it was clearly challenging at times for teacher Ángela to manage the linguistic expectations of Latin American and non-Latin American parents. Difficulties arose because non-Latin American – or at least non-Spanish-speaking – families were *erased* from the discourse of the school.⁸⁰ Their presence was not acknowledged publically, and even more importantly, the fact that all official communications with parents (both oral and written) were in Spanish effectively excluded them. This suggests that the economic imperative (securing maximum attendance to keep up with expenditure) was stronger than the possible disjuncture that it caused and that, as Heller (2006:214) had observed with Champlain, “the substantive nature of the consequences of pluralism, for authenticity, or authenticity for pluralism, are not confronted.” This failure to acknowledge the plural nature of the school can be traced, I

⁷⁹ Appadurai (1990:7) defines an ethnoscape as “the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers, and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world, and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree.”

⁸⁰ Within Irvine & Gal’s (2000) language ideology framework, the concept of erasure refers to “the process in which ideology, in simplifying the sociolinguistic field, renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible” (p.38).

argue, to ethno-political pressures. Such pressures reward schools (through funding) for catering to an ‘ethnic minority,’ preferably a marginalised one, rather than to aspirational parents from a range of ethnic backgrounds, or for providing cheap childcare. As a result from these findings, it is possible to conceive of complementary schools (especially those teaching elite languages) as more than “[ethnic] community spaces” servicing ‘their’ community, and to see how pragmatic, pluralist, de-ethnicised rationales co-exist with traditional ideologies of ‘one language/one people.’

5.4.2 Affiliation and disaffiliation with Latinos

Finally, I move on to how language ideologies informed the ways in which adults represented other Latino members of the school. These intersubjective representations revealed the currency of a discourse according to which language practices are read as signalling degrees of affiliation with other Latinos, and serve as the basis for evaluative discourses about community membership. First of all, proficiency in, and orientation to, Spanish were construed as essential to actualised ethnic belonging. For one’s child to display a native speaker-like accent (even more so in the case of a recognisably regional accent) was a token of ethnic authenticity and a source of pride for their family. By contrast, to display a lack of fluency and an Anglo accent could be a source of (ethnic) shame or embarrassment (although see below); this was captured in a mother’s description of her daughter as a “*gringuita*,” which expresses the discomfort of having the child’s accent and fluency index Anglo heritage more than Latin heritage, and thereby the failure of the parent to pass on the community language. Thus, these accounts showed how the most legitimate language in the micro linguistic market that was ELA was Spanish spoken with a Latin American accent, which could then serve to demarcate community boundaries and be used as an instrument of symbolic domination (cf. Bourdieu 1991:Part 1). This being said, fluency and accent could also convey a deceptive degree of community membership, as demonstrated in the case of the second generation mother assumed to be a born-and-bred Colombian, but whose lack of the relevant knowledge (here, about the country’s or the continent’s history) betrayed her ‘incomplete’ *latinidad* from the perspective of a teacher.

Among adults, there were two instances of *disaffiliation* with Latinos, the first one observed by me and the second one reported by participants. The first one related to the ELA staff criticising parents for talking loudly at assembly, which was referred to as “something cultural” and even associated with “poverty.” This illustrates how references to culture, though they appear to embrace community, in fact provide a model for locating and positioning individuals and groups within society (Ramos-Zayas 2004:41). Similar concerns

about places that reflect badly on the London Latino community have been documented elsewhere. Cock (2009:214) found that some Colombian migrants prefer to avoid the Colombian commercial spaces, such as parts of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre, because they do not like the image they project about Colombia; they associate these spaces with poverty and marginality, which were often the conditions that they were trying to leave behind. Cock (ibid.) observes that “[t]here is also a class factor in these views of marginality because some migrants associate these spaces with working class migrants who come from lower income and educational backgrounds in Colombia.”⁸¹ Certainly, stratification was apparent in the criticism of ELA parents’ lack of manners (“something cultural”) and, indirectly, in the comments about their lack of knowledge about, e.g., the benefits of bilingualism or Latin American history, although it is arguably more accurate to speak of ‘lower class-ness’ rather than ‘working class-ness’ (see also Section 6.6.2). In sum, both ELA and the shopping centre of Elephant and Castle function as symbolic places of Latin American visibility in the London landscape; they act as spaces of community *cohesion* in that they facilitate the meeting of Latinos and the purchase of services aimed at them, but also as spaces of community *division* insofar as processes of hierarchisation occur between the people who visit them.

In the second instance, participants reported that some Latino families valued European affiliation over Latino loyalty, either in terms of the acquisition of a European passport, the orientation to English at home, or a child’s display of an English accent when returning to Latin America. This was represented as a rejection and denial of ethnic heritage, which delegitimised ethnic membership, and was associated with a lack of education in some cases. It is important at this point to highlight the fact that, in Latin America, ethnicity and class are closely intertwined (cf. Wade 1997; Wade et al. 2008)⁸² and that social mobility may be achieved or attempted via various ‘whitening’ practices, notably through marriage, migration, and language choice (cf. Cánepa 2008; Berrío Palomo 2008; Leinaweaver 2008; Wade 1997). Thus, the negative portrayal of Latinos boasting legal and verbal signs of European-ness and, by extension, Whiteness needs to be contextualised within the historic, often institutionalised preference for *lo extranjero* – what is foreign, i.e. Western – in Latin

⁸¹ Similar unease about the negative image given out by Latin American spaces in London emerged elsewhere in my data. For instance, one of ELA teacher Luz’ friend, Carmela, also a postgraduate, expressed concern about how English people imagined Colombia. As I recorded in my fieldnotes (11/06/11), she “described how an English friend had taken her to Elephant and Castle and joked about how unsophisticated [my word to her, which she agreed with] it was (the run-down, basic appearance of the place and shops). She said that it wasn’t all like that in Colombia. ... Carmela was very keen for people to realise that in Colombia people were hardworking, [that it wasn’t all like Elephant].”

⁸² See also Villareal (2010) for a study of stratification by skin colour in contemporary Mexico.

America. In Mexico, this has been theorised as *malinchismo* (cf. the seminal collection of essays by Octavio Paz 1959) and has historically been associated with betrayal.⁸³

Finally the orientation of adult migrants to English may be motivated by other factors, such as linguistic insecurity. In her study of language practices and identities among Latino/as in the USA, Zentella (2008: 325) found that “speakers of stigmatized dialects may try to adopt a more prestigious variety, or shift to English altogether.” In the data collected, there was no evidence to suggest that those reported to orient to English experienced linguistic insecurity as the result of popular stereotypes about the dialects of their homeland; further research would be required to explore this possibility in order to better understand the mechanisms through which speakers end up orienting to English.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has found that ELA’s discursive positionings as (a) an ethnic minority charity, (b) a Latin American community project, and (c) a language school, described in Chapter 4, had repercussions for the functioning of the school. Its first two roles – (a) and (b) – combined effectively in that it sought to support the Latin American community by passing on linguistic, cultural, and artistic heritage, *inter alia*, as well as providing opportunities for young people of Latin American descent to socialise with their ethnic peers. By doing this, the school sought to support Latin Americans who may be struggling with parenting, language maintenance, and home literacy, and to act as a community-building organisation. In other words, it sought to facilitate the transmission of linguistic, cultural, and social capital. Its third role meant that it attracted non-Latin American families, whose children were seemingly well-integrated; however their presence also caused some level of disjuncture. Non-Latin American families were erased in the day-to-day discourse of the school and non-Spanish-speaking families were excluded by the sole use of Spanish in public communications. There was therefore a tension between a position of inclusivity and plurality (driven by economic imperatives as well as a principled openness) and a position of ethnolinguistic exclusivity and authenticity. I argued that “our language Spanish” proved to be a desirable commodity and the reason behind the creation of a local, super-diverse ‘speech community’ that defied ethnic boundaries.

⁸³ “The term *Malinchista* has deep historical roots in Mexico. The union between the Spanish conquistador Hernán Cortés and his indigenous concubine, Malintzin, or la Malinche, has been mythologised as leading to the birth of the first mestizo, or mixed-race Mexican. ... A *malinchista* is popularly known as a traitor. Or *la chingada*, literally the one who has been “fucked over,” sexually or figuratively, by the penetration of foreign imperialism and policies” (Schaeffer-Grabel 2007:511).

With regards to the representation of the Latin American community, Latin American parents and staff (mostly Colombian and female) produced evaluative descriptions of other community members, based on perceived language practices. Thus in this chapter *latinidad* was mediated through language ideologies; specifically, being able to and choosing to speak Spanish among family members was construed as key to community membership. These language ideological representations were stratifying inasmuch as they constructed linguistic and social hierarchies within the Latin American community. Notions of ethnic authenticity, affiliation, and community image were central to these discourses and the next chapter continues looking at these three notions. However this time the focus will be specifically on Latinas and the ways in which they constructed and evaluated feminine *latinidad* through their accounts of embodied and sexualised practices.

Chapter 6 – “Too sexy”? Ethnicising discourses about appearance and dancing among Latinas

6.1 Introduction

In Chapter 5, members of ELA were found to articulate discursive representations of Latin Americans in London that were hierarchising and based on language ideologies. In some of these representations, undesirable language practices were attributed to certain deficiencies (i.e., ethnic disloyalty, lack of education) and were seen as contributing to giving out a damaging image of the Latin American community. This chapter now looks at (a) how accounts of gendered and embodied practices of Latinas produced similarly evaluative and stratifying discourses, and (b) whether these practices were deemed to contribute positively to the image of the community. It seeks to address the following research question: How do gendered, ethnicising, and stratifying discourses inform the ways in which Latinas are represented among young Latinas from the 1.5 generation? It follows on from empirical and theoretical research that conceives of the (human) body as a social body, which attains value through different systems of symbolic exchange and whose characteristics (e.g. shape, clothing) carry social semiotic meaning (cf. Bourdieu 2010; Skeggs 1997, 2005, 2005b, 2004; Turner 1994). In particular, it draws on Skeggs’ (1997) work on respectability, as a mechanism through which some women are ‘othered’ and pathologised, although it departs from it insofar as it does not seek to constrain accounts within a rigid working-class/middle-class dichotomy.

The chapter starts by describing the crowning of Tara, a Latina Londoner, as national beauty queen, so as to extract an ethnicising discourse from some of the media coverage and Facebook reactions (Section 6.2). This discourse essentialises Latinas as attractive and sexy – attributes which are seen as bringing pride and recognition to the community. Then, it provides an overview of participants who were involved in informal, unstructured conversations about femininity in general and *colombianas* (Colombian women) / Latinas in particular (Section 6.3). From there, it describes how female participants assessed other *colombianas* / Latinas in relation to appearance (Section 6.4) and dancing (Section 6.5), and analyses whether these portrayals aligned with the discourse outlined in Section 6.2. It argues that the ways of dressing and dancing of Latinas were coded as a respectable part of Latin American heritage, or as excessive and unrespectable practices. The following discussion begins by situating these representations within the context of Latin American patriarchal norms, before de-ethnicising them and contextualising them within the current

sexualisation of culture in the UK (Section 6.6.1). In addition it makes the case for theorising some of these representations in terms of gendered pathologising narratives (Section 6.6.2) and of aspirational discourses (Section 6.6.3).

6.2 Tara, Latina and London beauty queen

In May 2010, twenty-year-old Tara Hoyos-Martínez, born and raised in London, of Colombian parents, won the national competition to become Miss Universe GB 2010. As discussed in Chapter 1 (Section 1.2.2), Latinos have not enjoyed public prominence in London, and Tara has been one of the rare Latin American Londoners to have achieved a degree of local and national fame and visibility. Tara came to my attention when I saw, on Facebook, that two of (ELA teacher) Ángela's daughters were supporting her campaign to win the competition (cf. Section 3.6). This campaign used the social networking site to secure the backing of friends and family, and, by tapping into 'ethnic solidarity,' of people of Latin American origin, both from the UK and from the digital Latino diaspora. In the run-up to the contest, Tara's widowed mother regularly posted updates, in Spanish and English, and invitations to participate in supporting events taking place in Latino locales in London (cf. the public Facebook groups 'Tara Hoyos-Martinez Miss Universe GB 2010!' – henceforth referred to as FG1 – and 'Tara Hoyos-Martinez Miss Universe Great Britain 2010!' – henceforth referred to as FG2). Tara's victory was not mentioned in the UK broadsheets, but it was reported by Spanish-language media such as BBC *Mundo* (the Spanish-language arm of the BBC) because of Tara's Latin descent.⁸⁴ In this section, I draw on the two Facebook groups, as well as some of Spanish-language media coverage, to extract a widely-circulated discourse about Latinas.

6.2.1 Ethnicising discourse Part I: Latinas are attractive and sexy

"The new Miss Great Britain is Colombian," announced the headline of a BBC *Mundo* article (04/05/10), while its lead sentence read: **"For the first time in Great Britain, a girl of Latin American descent was crowned Anglo-Saxon beauty queen"** (my emphasis, to

⁸⁴ For coverage in the Latin American media, see, for example, the Colombian television channel *Caracol*: <http://www.caracoltv.com/entretenimiento/missuniverso2010/articulo-177067-tara-hoyos-la-britanica-mas-colombiana-miss-universo>, and the Mexican women's magazine *Actual*: <http://revistaactual.com.mx/2010/05/latina-se-convierte-en-reina-britanica/>. Retrieved 30/04/11.

reproduce the stress conveyed syntactically in Spanish).⁸⁵ Further on, the director of the agency organising the event was quoted as saying: **“the South Americans have an excellent record at Miss Universe, so we are hoping that Tara will do it in 2010 for Great Britain.”** The article went on to remind the reader that **“more than twenty Latinas have carried the title of Miss Universe.”** Numerous messages of support on the wall of the two Facebook groups also drew attention to the association between Latin American women and beauty contests in particular and good looks in general (e.g. “Wow.. this is a de[m]o[n]stration that the latin woman is worldwide's most beautiful Viva el poder latino!! [Long live Latin power]” FG2, 04/05/10, 08:09). In Spanish newspaper *El País* (04/05/10), Tara declared: **“I am delighted to represent the United Kingdom at Miss Universe with the beauty, the joy and the charm/friendliness [*simpatía*] of the Latin woman,”** thereby underscoring the reputation of Latinas as attractive women.

The idea of the ‘Latin beauty’ is firmly associated with *dark* features, as the *El País* article highlights:

Although she was born in London, her features give her away: her dark eyes and her black hair speak of the Latin descent of this young woman of Colombian parents who declares to be “proud” of her origins.

Data extract 6.A *El País* (04/05/10)

However, it is worth noting that some of the supposedly Latin American features that *El País* referred to (dark eyes and hair), and that which it did not (a fuller figure than a conventional Western model), were altered for the Miss Universe contest. In fewer than four months, Tara had noticeably lost weight and her hair had been dyed light brown with blonde highlights (see Plate 6.1). She had effectively been refashioned to fit the “norms of dominant white glamorous and high maintenance femininity” (McRobbie 2009:69), thus eliding some of the traits that “gave away” her ethnic origin. The ideologised and hegemonic preference for lighter skin, especially in women, has been documented in critical accounts of colourism and pigmentocracy (cf. Collins 1990 and Mirza 1997).⁸⁶ It is also visible in the whitened appearance of global Latina icons like Shakira (as well as their Black counterparts, e.g. Beyoncé), which leads Mendible (2007:3) to ask “[I]f this much-touted validation of “Latin beauty” indeed marks a genuine change in dominant aesthetic patterns ... then why are prominent “Latin beauties” still dyeing their hair blonde, slimming their bodies, or wearing blue contact lenses to “whiten” their looks?” Indeed, Molina-Guzmán (2010:5) observes that

⁸⁵ My translation. All subsequent translations of Spanish quotations (indicated in bold) are mine. See Appendix D for original extended data extracts in Spanish.

⁸⁶ See Nakano Glenn (2008) for a recent study of global, transnational circuits in the marketing and consumption of skin lighteners.

“even as the ideology of racial mixture and democracy is celebrated among many Latinas/os, whiteness and white notions of beauty (*blanqueamiento*) still reign supreme, as most clearly exemplified in the representational privileging of lighter-skinned Latinas on television programs produced in Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Venezuela, among other countries.”⁸⁷



Plate 6.1 Tara at the Miss Universe GB (May) and Miss Universe (August) competitions

Tara’s transformation also needs to be situated within the exacting objectifying process that beauty pageants involve. In Latin America, the intense pressures to conform to prescriptive and standardised aesthetic ideals of beauty have increasingly led contestants to refashion their body artificially, through plastic surgery (Bialowas Pobutsky 2010; Cardona 2007; Finol 1999; Rutter-Jensen 2005). In Colombia, the prevalence of cosmetic surgery has been such that the president of the prestigious and hugely popular *Concurso Nacional de Belleza* (National Beauty Contest) ordered that only women who had not been operated would be able to represent Colombia in international contests (Giraldo 2006).⁸⁸ Hence, one of Tara’s Facebook supporters was proud to proclaim her corporeal authenticity: “A true beauty none of that plastic for our Tara” (FG1, 20/02/10, 06:59).

Latinas are not only reputed to be attractive, but also sexy. This was evidenced by the method used by Tara to raise charitable funds as part of the beauty pageant. She and other girls of Colombian origin posed suggestively for a calendar that was sold in locales

⁸⁷ In her study of beauty contests in Ecuador, Moreno (2007) notes a persistence of whitening projects in some of the representations of the Ecuadorian nation. Similarly, in his study of femininities and beauty queens in Bolivia, Canessa (2008) found that the Bolivian candidates for national and international beauty contests are “all invariably tall and white” (p.93) (my translation), when Bolivia is the South American country with the highest proportion of inhabitants of non-White, indigenous ancestry. Importantly, Canessa draws attention to the fact that processes of whitening for the purpose of social mobility apply to all Latin American countries, both in the past and in the present (p.80).

⁸⁸ On the cultural importance of the *Concurso Nacional de Belleza* in Colombia, see Bolívar (2005); Bolívar Ramírez (2007); Cunin (2005). On the historic links between the *Concurso* and drug-traffickers, see Cardona (2007).

frequented by the Latin American community in London (cf. Figure 6.1; Tara is pictured in the top left and the bottom right images). The success of Tara's fundraising efforts for the Joshua Foundation was such that she was subsequently also crowned Miss Charity at the Miss Universe GB competition.



Figure 6.1 Tara in the fundraising calendar for the Joshua Foundation

6.2.2 Ethnicising discourse Part II: This brings pride and recognition to the community

Tara's victory at the Miss Universe GB contest was heralded as a success for the whole Latin American community. On Facebook, a post by free London Latino newspaper *Extra* described it as **"another triumph for Latinos in the UK"** (FG1, 08/05/10, 10:38), while another supporter thanked her for "showing that Colombians are more than just a stereotype" (FG2, 07/05/10, 02:42). Although she did not always reply to messages of support, on this occasion Tara later posted in return "Your comment means a lot, thank you so much, I just hope to make you all proud" (13/06/10, 16:55). Indeed, Tara saw her accomplishments as much more than an individual success, and rather as a way of validating the respectability of the Latin American community:

The triumph of Tara Hoyos-Martínez has made a big impact on the Latino community in the United Kingdom. "It's a big step so that we can integrate, succeed and so that it can help us get rid of the negative image [in] the public eye. I want to be a voice to demonstrate that we are hard-working, honest and humble," commented the girl.

Data extract 6.B BBC *Mundo* (04/05/10)

These statements highlight a concern about the "negative image" of Latin Americans and the negative "stereotype" surrounding Colombians, which spurn a desire to demonstrate pride in, and bring recognition to, the community. Thus, when Tara declared that **"my place in the final represents a landmark for the Latin community in terms of being accepted in the mainstream of British culture"** (BBC *Mundo*, *ibid.*), she construed her victory as a sign of positive visibility and overcoming of marginalisation for the Latin American community in the UK. The notion that beauty contests can be part of the social integration of Latin Americans is echoed by the 'Miss Ecuador UK' competition (cf. Figure 6.2), whose principal aim is to **"highlight the beauty of Ecuadorian women, promote Ecuadorian culture in British society and integrate the Ecuadorian community living in the UK."**⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Retrieved 24/10/11 from <http://www.ecuadorian.org.uk/missecuadoruk/index.html>.



Figure 6.2 Miss Ecuador UK 2011

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Tara was represented as more than a beautiful woman. The media coverage and Facebook messages were keen to emphasise, not only her good looks, but also her credentials as a ‘thinking woman,’ since she was described as studying Chemistry, Biology and Medicine at the Manchester Metropolitan University, with the intention of doing a postgraduate course in Medicine and specialising in surgery.⁹⁰ In sum, Tara was represented as a combination of beauty and intelligence; by achieving multiple forms of success (altruistic, academic, aesthetic), she provided an alternative discourse to negative stereotypes about Latinos in general and Colombians in particular.

In this section, I have identified an ethnicising discourse which constructs Latinas as naturally attractive and sexy, in such a way that it brings pride and recognition to the Latin American community. However displaying such ‘beauty’ may come at a cost, as is suggested by Tara’s transformation, i.e. the slimming and whitening of her features. Bearing this in mind, I now turn to how participants represented and evaluated the appearance of Latinas in terms of aesthetics, artifice, and academic achievement. First, I provide an overview of the participants who contributed data to this chapter.

6.3 Overview of participants

⁹⁰ This contrasts sharply with the stereotype of the idiotic beauty pageant contestant, whose dim-witted declarations – especially in the USA and Latin America – are a source of amusement in popular culture. See the popularity of related YouTube videos, e.g. ‘*Top 10 Misses más brutas del Universo*’ (‘Top 10 of the most ignorant Misses of the Universe,’ retrieved 20/10/11 from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-sSooqYisM>).

This chapter focuses on the perspectives of young women from the 1.5 generation, who migrated to London as children or adolescents (aged between 2 to 14). Half of these were Colombian (Monika, Yesika, Bibiana, Liliana), two were Ecuadorian (Tatiana, Rosario), one was Peruvian (Mandana), and the remaining one was Peruvian but had previously lived almost all her life in Spain (Cinthya). All of them were in full-time education, either following academic studies (6th form college and university) or vocational studies (FE college), and living at home with their parent(s).

In order to contextualise and complement their discourses, participant-observation was carried out in diverse settings in London and in Colombia, where conversations took place with a range of participants. These included their mothers, adults involved with ELA (teaching or volunteering) and with LAWRS (workers and service user), as well as Colombians met in informal social settings (e.g. at a wedding and in family homes). Overall, most of the participants were women (20/23), were under 35 (17/23), and of Colombian descent (17/23). Table 6.1 provides an overview of the participants.

| | Name | Sex | Age | Country of origin | Migrated to London aged | Level of education | Occupation |
|---------------------------------------------|----------------------|-----|-------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| (a) ACCESS THROUGH ELA | | | | | | | |
| Ángela's family | Ángela | F | 40s | Col. | 28 | vocational | nursery nurse |
| | Monika Yesika | F | 20s | Col. | 6 | A levels | BSc students |
| | Bibiana | F | 17-18 | Col. | 2 | GCSEs | A level student |
| Belén's family | Belén | F | 40s | Peru | 30s | undergrad. | primary teacher |
| | Mandana | F | 20s | Peru | 10 | A levels | BSc student |
| Euclides' family | Euclides | M | 50s | Col. | 40s | postgrad. | language teacher |
| | Fernanda | F | 40s | Col. | 18 | secondary | unemployed |
| | Silvia | F | 26 | Britain | n.a. | BA | MA student |
| ELA teachers | Luz | F | 27 | Col. | 24 | MSc | various |
| | María | F | 20s | Col. | 20s | undergrad. | various |
| | Pamela | F | 32 | Col. | 28 | undergrad. | dancer |
| volunteer | Heidy | F | 25 | Col. | 24 | undergrad. | waitress |
| (b) ACCESS THROUGH SOUTHSIDE COLLEGE | | | | | | | |
| | Liliana | F | 18 | Col. | 14 | ESOL | FE student |
| | Tatiana | F | 17 | Ecuador | 16 | ESOL | FE student |
| | Rosario | F | 16 | Ecuador | 15 | ESOL | FE student |
| (c) ACCESS THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS | | | | | | | |
| London | Cinthya | F | 16 | Peru Spain | 13 | GCSEs | A level student |
| | Claudia | F | 31 | Col. | 20s | undergrad. | LAWRS worker |
| | Pía | F | 36 | Arg. | 30 | postgrad. | LAWRS worker |
| | Jhon | M | 20s | Col. | 20s | undergrad. | visiting student |
| | Leidy | F | 38 | Col. | 36 | vocational | cleaner |
| Col. | Andrea | F | 32 | Col. | 20s | undergrad. | teacher |
| | Julián | M | 20s | Col. | n.a. | undergrad. | graphic designer |

Table 6.1 Overview of participants⁹¹

6.4 “It’s all about beauty”

Generally, participants’ accounts harmonized with the first part of the ethnicising discourse presented above insofar as they associated Latinas with attractiveness. However

⁹¹ The category ‘various’ refers to the multiple forms of employment that some participants were involved in, some of which were prohibited by their student visa (which limits employment to 20 hours per week). Col. stands for Colombia; Arg. for Argentina; undergrad. for undergraduate; postgrad. for postgraduate.

these accounts also differed from it inasmuch as they did not refer to ‘racialised’ features like hair colour (bypassing the stereotype of the dark Latina). Moreover they did not present Latinas as intrinsically beautiful; rather they emphasised the amount of *attention* dedicated to appearance and the amount of *effort* invested in adorning and embellishing the body. With regards to whether pretty Latinas are a source of pride and recognition, participants were more likely to embrace sanitising practices which indexed respectability, and to reject eroticising practices which indexed excessive sexuality.

When, after talking about plastic surgery, I asked Liliana (18, Colombian) whether she thought that women (in general) were very focused on their appearance in London, she replied:

44.35 Liliana **Latin women yes**
 Sophie **Latin women yes**
 Liliana **on the other hand**
one thing I like very much
about English people
is that they are very
they are very uncomplicated
as I say
they don’t worry about what people say
 44.50 **like the people like the Latin people**
 Data extract 6.C Interview with Liliana (13/03/09)

The view that Latin American women cared much more about their appearance and hence made more of an effort than women in London was widely echoed by participants. For Ángela’s daughters (20, Colombian), this concern with appearance defined Latinas, both in Colombia and in London:

33.09 Monika but then even here
 Latin American girls are like that anyway
 Sophie Yeah
 Monika they’re very [into looks
 Yesika [yeah looks
 Monika if you go to a club
 like a Latin American club
 there won’t be one girl who’s like
 perfect hair perfect dress
 Yesika yes yes *
 Monika they’re very like that still here
 that they still don’t lose
 33.27 that kind of aspect
 Data extract 6.D Interview with Monika and Yesika (12/08/09)

For most of the women, having to ‘look good’ when you left the house was ‘normal’ and part of being a respectable Latina. For Bibiana (17, Colombian), this was both part of home education and was linked to a positive image of Latinas (Interview 21/11/09). For instance,

she described how, if she told people in the street that she was Colombian, they found it “**exotic**” and “**sexy**”; when I asked her what she thought of this, she expressed pride in the global image of Colombian women/Latinas:

31.55 Bibiana **Colombian models no even the ladies
us Colombian women are many
we are very pres- very well presented *
and for us well it's not
well for well
personally I don't
I don't dress like this
to look sexy or or ()
but in the end I end up looking like this present-
well I'm not going to put on a sweatshirt
and whatever
to go a party
because I've been taught
that you have to go looking pretty and attractive
so I think that everyone
has this image of the Latinas
32.27 especially with all the famous Latinos**
Data extract 6.E Interview with Bibiana (21/11/09)

The consensus was that *colombianas* (Colombian women) in particular invested time, effort, and money into ‘looking good,’ which meant emphasising their femininity by wearing, inter alia, make-up, heels, and revealing clothes. For instance, Liliana (18, Colombian), who had grown up in Cali and migrated to London aged 14, loved and only bought “**Colombian jeans**,” which, unlike the jeans in the UK, “**(mould) one's body**” (Interview 13/03/09).⁹² Among *colombianas*, women from the *paisa* region especially were associated with looks and fashion.⁹³ Indeed, several participants agreed that, in the *paisa* city of Medellin, you could not go out looking untidy or everyone would stare at you; Yesika compared it to “showing your skin in a Muslim country” (Fieldnotes 08/01/11). Women’s pronounced preoccupation with their appearance was linked to the persistence of traditional gender roles and to the obsession with achieving physical perfection in Colombia.

However, efforts to look attractive and/or to attract attention were not always endorsed as a desirable aspect of panethnic culture and could be seen as giving out the wrong kind of image. In fact, the only participant to be born in London and not to identify as Latina, Silvia

⁹² Several participants mentioned the tightness of jeans worn by Latinas. In fact, a girl’s jeans is one of the identifying categories compiled on the Facebook page ‘You know you are a Latino in London if...’: “u don’t ask a chik if she is Latina, u kno just by looking at her jeans” (retrieved 04/02/10 from <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?sid=5421d17e05a279821dda3a1a97de4ac9&gid=9233776793>). When Monika and Bibiana read this description (cf. 3.6), they laughed and agreed, commenting that these jeans were “really really tight” (Interview 08/04/10).

⁹³ As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the *paisa* region encompasses the department of Antioquia and the coffee-growing region known as the *Eje Cafetero*.

(cf. Section 3.5.1), rejected the sexy Colombian aesthetic and what it entailed. Silvia (26, British) described how, when she visited her family in Colombia, the feminine “uniform” consisted of “really tight jeans and really tight top” (Interview 27/02/10). This was not her style and she chose to wear “really baggy clothes” in order “to counter the sort of attention that you get from men,” which included “leering” and “catcalling” (ibid.). Conversely, according to some participants who had migrated as teens or pre-teens, it was London Latinas who dressed too sexy: for Rosario (16, Ecuadorian), who had only been in London for about nine months, London Latinas were different to what she had known in Ecuador. Rosario came from Riobamba, in the Andean *sierra*, where the dress sense is conservative; for instance, bare legs are not displayed and women always wear tights or leggings underneath shorts or skirts. After her male co-interviewee criticised the excessively wide and low-hanging trousers worn by Latin and Black people in London, I asked Rosario what she thought about local fashion from a girl’s perspective:

| | | |
|-------|---------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11.02 | Sophie | and the way of dressing you as a girl what do you feel comfortable with the way of dressing here? is it like in Ecuador or not? |
| | Rosario | no it’s not the same for Latin girls at least in the Latin girls not at all they are too what is the perfect word for this mm (1.0) I don’t know (1.0) |
| 11.25 | | they dress too sexy |

Data extract 6.F Interview with Rosario (06/03/09)

For Rosario, these girls “**have no measure of decency**” and seem to have *lost* their modesty since coming to London: “**they don’t have any limits in the way they dress anymore**” [my emphasis] (ibid.). Here London Latinas were represented as excessive and unrespectable.

Clothing was not the only characteristic which attracted criticism; so did the lengths to which Latinas went to improve their appearance. Just as Latin American beauty pageant contestants were reported in 6.2.1 to turn increasingly to artificial enhancements, London Latinas were described as keen consumers of plastic surgery.⁹⁴ Liliana’s (18, Colombian) categorical assertion that, in London, “**every Latin woman that you see, the majority has had liposuction or is going to go and have it done**” (Interview 13/03/09), was possibly hyperbolic, but it conveyed the sense that cosmetic surgery was a widespread practice. Moreover, just as *Colombian* beauty pageant contestants were especially reported to resort to

⁹⁴ Popular procedures for women included breast enlargement, rhinoplasty, and liposuction; men were also reported to have procedures such as pectoral and buttock implants.

plastic surgery, London Colombians were singled out as the group that most favoured artificial enhancements. In fact, be it in London or in Colombia, *all* the Colombian people with whom I had a conversation about plastic surgery told me about family members and acquaintances who had had cosmetic surgery in Colombia. Participants whose family came from the *paisa* region reported a greater incidence of cosmetic surgery among their relatives and peers. For instance, Jhon (20s, Colombian), who had only left Colombia a few months before, estimated that, in his home city of Medellin, about 90% of his female friends – whom he described as educated and professional – had had cosmetic surgery.⁹⁵ Similarly, Silvia (26, British) described how nearly all her female relatives (from the *paisa* region) had had plastic surgery, including her mother and aunt (both beauty queens), and how she had been brought up to think that you could change whatever was wrong with your body. Yet she had rejected that aspect of her upbringing when she had started to read feminist thought and she strongly disliked people commenting on appearance. When I met her, Silvia had chosen to write her MA dissertation on gender (Fieldnotes 20/06/10).

Reasons given for the prevalence of plastic surgery in Colombia included: (a) low prices and ease of obtaining credit, (b) intense competition between women, (c) a preference for an artificial aesthetic, promoted by celebrities (what Liliana called “*la mujer postiza*”: “the fake woman,” Interview 13/03/09), and (d) the low self-esteem of women who used it to please or reclaim a partner. Consumers comprised women from humble and professional backgrounds.⁹⁶ For instance, while interviewing Colombian women as part of a research project in London, Claudia came across cleaners who saved up all year to go and have an operation done in Colombia (Fieldnotes 16/05/10). Consumers also ranged from ‘seniors’ to

⁹⁵ The capital of Antioquia, Medellin, and the capital of the Valle del Cauca, Cali, are both famous for their powerful drug cartels in the 1980s-90s and are also said to be two of the capitals of plastic surgery in Latin America. The *paisa* region, the Valle del Cauca, and Bogota are known for being, historically, the centres of drug trafficking. According to my calculation, they also have the highest numbers of plastic surgeons in the country: a total of 435 according to the Colombian Society of Cosmetic and Reconstructive Plastic Surgery, which is an under-estimate as it does not include all the plastic surgeons who are registered with another professional body and those who are not even registered (cf.

http://www.cirugiaplastica.org.co/index.php?option=com_affiliation&catid=32&Itemid=75, retrieved 03/01/11). As a mode of very rough comparison, the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons lists around 84 surgeons in London and the South East (cf. <http://www.baaps.org.uk/>, retrieved 03/01/11). There are about 45 million people in Colombia, against 61 million in the UK. On the connection between the meteoric rise of plastic surgery and cocaine trafficking in Colombia, see Bialowas Pobutsky (2010), Cardona (2007), and Rutter-Jensen (2005). For a fictional rendition, see of course the novel *Sin Tetas No Hay Paraíso* by Bolivar (2005).

⁹⁶ As Monika put it, “it’s cheaper to go there, you know, buy your ticket, have fun and get your plastic surgery than it is here basically” (Interview 12/08/09). Several participants knowingly quoted the price of breast augmentation in Colombia; for instance, Ángela spoke of “**four or five million pesos**” (Interview 08/04/10), which corresponds to about £1300-1700 and thus compares very favourably with UK prices (around £3400-5000, quoted from <http://www.privatehealth.co.uk/hospitaltreatment/whatdoesitcost/breast-enlargement-cost/>, retrieved 07/04/11).

teenagers – including fifteen-year-olds in recipient of presents for the *quinceañera* (the coming of age celebration of a girl's fifteenth birthday in Latin America). Thus, among Colombian participants, plastic surgery was presented as common, unexceptional: Monika and Yesika (20) described themselves as having “the Colombian attitude,” by which they meant that “it’s normal to see so many people getting plastic surgery” (Interview 12/08/09). By contrast, Monika observed that for her “English” or “uni friends,” plastic surgery was “a really big issue,” which they discussed “as abortion or euthanasia” (Interview 12/08/09). Despite the stated normality of plastic surgery, very few Colombian participants wished to be “*hechas*” (literally, “done”). Moreover, a desire to look attractive did not entail approval of plastic surgery; for instance, Liliana (18, Colombian) considered herself “**vain**” and invested in sexy clothes and other types of beautification, but she was strongly opposed to artificial enhancements (“**if you don’t have titties, well you don’t have titties and that’s it,**” Interview 13/03/09). Overall none of the Colombian participants expressed concern about how the image of London Latinos might be negatively affected by the practices of *colombianas*.

However, the three *peruanas* (Peruvian women) constructed the perceived vanity and superficiality of Latinas, especially *colombianas*, as detrimental to the moral standing and academic achievements of Latin Americans in London. While we discussed the underrepresentation of London Latinos in HE, Mandana (20) denounced the corruption, alcohol and drug abuse, and gang culture prevalent among “**Latin people here.**” Her mother, Belén (40), followed by describing “**another type of community**” that was at odds with academic achievement: this community, “**mostly Colombian,**” was devoted to the body. Echoing her mother, who wondered how teenage Latinas/*colombianas* wearing skimpy clothes could concentrate “**on their studies, on their self-improvement,**” Mandana voiced disquiet about how the desire of a Colombian mother for her daughter to have plastic surgery would affect her ambitions. The daughter would grow up thinking that “**she must be pretty**”, and that “**her only goal in life is to attract a man, but not to be something herself.**” Later, Belén talked about them going to a beauty contest (“Miss Latina” or “Miss Colombia”) at Colombian restaurant *La Bodeguita*, in Elephant and Castle. She and Mandana agreed that the contestants’ bodies did not seem natural. Mandana then commented on the association between beauty pageants and Latinos, lamenting the fact that Latinos should wish to “**be seen and stand out in this way,**” as it was “**leading us to nowhere**” and the little admiration it would garner would be for “**stupid**” things (Interview 20/11/09). In this respect Mandana and Belén were voicing a counter discourse to the one stating that the attractiveness of Latinas brought pride and recognition to the community, as exemplified in the case of Tara (cf. Section 6.2.2). For these two women, the greatness and renown of Latin

American heritage lay, not in female beauty, but in its pre-Columbian civilizations and in its art forms (see the celebration of the Inca empire and of traditional dances in their community group, Section 3.5.3). Winning beauty contests achieved the wrong kind of visibility for the community.

The other *peruana*, Cinthya (16), also established a dichotomy between the pursuit of cosmetic and intellectual accomplishments. For these three participants (respectively an A Level student, an undergraduate, and a graduate), the appearance, aspirations, and achievement of Latinas were closely interlinked – a connection not drawn by Colombian participants engaged in similar levels of study. In particular, the accounts of Cinthya and Mandana, who migrated to London aged 13 and 10 respectively, were strikingly similar. Upon arrival, they were placed in secondary schools, where they initially gravitated around Latinas, who clustered together. However, they both felt that only talking Spanish would not enable them to progress either linguistically or academically. Mandana declared that, by the end of her first year in London, **“I realised that it hadn’t helped me at all because I wasn’t learning hardly any English and all we did was talk, talk, talk in Spanish”** (Interview 20/11/09). So both decided to leave their group of Latinas so that they could practise English and spend time with hard-working students. The Latinas’ orientation to Spanish was not the only thing they objected to: their exaggerated concern with looking attractive was associated with moral failings and educational failure. For instance, Mandana described her former Latina schoolmates as **“the most well dressed”** (**“coiffured,” “made-up,”** and wearing **“heels”**) in the school, yet she argued that other pupils saw them as **“a little empty”** because they were only worried about **“what is outside and not what is inside.”** From her perspective, other students saw the Latina as **“a pretty girl but [one who is] loose”** (ibid.). As a result, she distanced herself from the Latinas because:

130.17 Mandana **they didn’t have a good image
inside the school and
and among (1.0) the people who most
stud- devoted themselves to studying
and to working and to doing the things
they weren’t involved
on the on the contrary
they were in the lowest sets
130.29 if they even came [to school]**

Data extract 6.G Interview with Mandana (20/11/09)

Likewise, Cinthya asserted that the Latinas she knew in London **“devote themselves a lot to appearance and to attracting boys ... every conversation by a Latina is about**

boys” (Interview 28/01/09).⁹⁷ This contrasted with her experience of living in Spain, where her Ecuadorian friends “were in their little group too,” but “were hard-working” and “it wasn’t so much about appearance” (ibid.). She described her female Latin friends as “[her] people”, whom “she loved,” but she also acknowledged that she disliked aspects of their culture (especially the *colombianas*): the “piss-ups,” the “make-up,” the “tight jeans,” and the fact that:

39.52 Cinthya it’s all about beauty
 and if you are
 the most silly girl in this world
 it doesn’t matter
40.08 because you’re beautiful
Data extract 6.H Interview with Cinthya (28/01/09)

In sum, the representations that emerge from these data are more nuanced than the ethnicising discourse outlined in 6.3, and also more critical of the pursuit of beauty and/or sexiness than the ‘Tara narrative.’ ‘Looking good,’ which could be understood as looking seductive, was endorsed as part of respectable Latin American culture, particularly Colombian culture, and positively linked to global Latina icons. However dressing sexy was also coded as excessive and linked to academic failure and moral failings, which were seen as reflecting badly on the community. The next section examines how dancing similarly indexed proud Latin American heritage and unrespectable behaviour.

6.5 “Being Latin, we are used to dancing like that”

Dancing was one of the most frequent, varied, and popular activities I observed throughout fieldwork. Most young and older women in this chapter’s sample stated that they loved dancing and four (out of fifteen) adult women (over 18) had taught it at some point in the UK. It functioned both as an important intra-ethnic and inter-ethnic practice. In other words, it was something that Latinos enjoyed doing together, be it dancing salsa at Mango Latin Club in Seven Sisters, learning the Peruvian folkloric *marinera* in a community hall in Lambeth, or singing along to reggaeton classics like ‘*Lo que pasó, pasó*’ in a West End venue. It was something that young women did with their parent(s) and with their peers. In

⁹⁷ Like Mandana and Cinthya, Bibiana (17, Colombian) distinguished her Colombian friends from her other friends in terms of study path and interests. With her Colombian friends, who studied subjects “like beauty,” she could talk about personal matters; while with her friends “at 6th form,” she could talk “about college and going to university,” and topics like “the war” (Interview 21/11/09). However, Bibiana differed from the two *peruanas* and aligned with her compatriot Tara (Miss Universe GB 2010) in that she did not view a pronounced attention to appearance as an impediment to educational achievement.

the case of more formal dances (which involve specific steps with a partner), dancing was a practice where men held the upper hand; to dance salsa, for instance, women have to wait for men to invite them to dance. When I expressed frustration at having to remain seated and suggested that girls could just get up and dance together ‘freestyle’ (notably at Mango Latin Club and at the wedding in Colombia, cf. Plate 6.2), I was made to understand that this was ‘not the done thing.’



Plate 6.2 Salsa dancing at the wedding in Colombia

In a more oppressive example of male domination, Monika and Yesika (20, Colombian) recounted that when they were taking regular salsa classes, their Colombian dance instructor openly commented on girls’ bodies, saying things such as “mm, your arms look flabby” or “you look a bit fat,” thus inducing insecurity about their weight (Interview 12/08/09). Here, as in beauty pageants, dancing could be an area where Latinas felt pressured to display a particular body shape.

At the same time, dancing was also something to be performed for non-Latinos, a ‘window onto Latin American culture,’ in contexts ranging from a modest procession in the neighbourhood of St Pancras, to a fairly-well attended dance rendition of the Inca Empire at Peckham Theatre, to major celebrations like the Lord Mayor’s show and the *Carnaval del Pueblo* (cf. Plate 6.3).⁹⁸

⁹⁸ On the popularity of salsa in London, see Román-Velázquez 1999; in Sydney, see Schneider 2008; in New Jersey, see Borland 2009.



Plate 6.3 Salsa dancers at the *Carnaval del Pueblo* 2009

Like Latin American beauty pageant contestants, Latin American dancers are part of the global ‘Latin brand’ and a source of group pride and recognition. Some of the most famous Latinos are reputed both for their physique and their dancing (e.g. ballet dancer Carlos Acosta and pop singer Shakira). ‘Pretty Latinas’ and ‘dancing Latinas’ are positive, marketable symbols of Latin American visibility. In addition, some styles of Latin American dancing, especially contemporary ones like the Dominican *bachata*, involve dancers dancing very close together. By acquiring global visibility, some of these dances, like the *lambada*, have also contributed to associate *latinidad* with explicit sensuality.⁹⁹ Thus, in terms of prevalent cultural narratives, Latinas are associated with beauty (cf. Section 6.2) and with dancing; in both instances, they are linked to physicality, provocativeness, desirability, and to successful manifestations of the global ‘Latin brand.’

At ELA, the more traditional and less explicitly erotic instances of Latin America’s dance heritage tended to be preferred (cf. the suitably decorous representation of salsa, tango, and *cumbia* in the school’s panel, Plate 5.1). Dance had a very high status as a school activity and was particularly prominent at the school’s tenth anniversary celebration. On that occasion, performances ranged from children demonstrating traditional dances for each Latin American country to young adults from Latin American community dance groups making guest appearances. It also involved ELA’s own dance group (all girls, aged around

⁹⁹ On the *lambada* as a globalised music/dance phenomenon (triggered by the 1989 global hit ‘Lambada’, marketed as Brazilian but in fact a French plagiarism of a Bolivian song covered in Brazil), see Garcia (2008).

9-10) wearing “very sexy outfits” to perform the *mapale*, an Afro-Colombian dance which involves technically demanding hip- and chest-thrusting (Fieldnotes 16/07/11). A year before the celebrations, while I observed the same dance group practising the *mapale*, the dance teacher, Pamela, and I discussed some of the students. I commented that one girl (of Spanish and African descent) danced well but that she displayed “**a certain rigidity**.”

Pamela agrees and contrasts it with some of the girls in the group who dance much more fluidly and whose origin is “*latino*.” She cites the example of Holly [very Latin name!!], whose “**father is from Ecuador**,” doesn’t speak hardly any Spanish (and indeed she addresses her in English) but who dances reggaeton and other dances very well. It’s interesting that she would link dancing ability to ethnic origin.

Data extract 6.I Fieldnotes (20/03/10)

Here Pamela was reproducing the essentialising discourse according to which dancing is something that Latinos do well because they have a natural sense of rhythm. In her study of salsa clubs in London, Román-Velázquez (1999) found a similar “assumption that Latin people should know how to dance” (p.124) and that dancing functioned as a way of enacting a Latin American identity (p.126). She observed that “bodies are understood through discourses about English people as inhibited and emotionally restrained which is often contrasted with discourses about Latinos as spontaneous, uninhibited and emotionally expressive” (p.130). Indeed, this contrastive discourse, which represents English/British people as more reserved and distant, while Latinos are more warm and welcoming, was reiterated by various participants, particularly the adolescents who had recently migrated to London and the older migrants who had arrived as adults.

Nevertheless, just as Latinas were criticised for being excessive in the way they dressed (and sought surgical enhancements), Latinas were also condemned for going “too far” in the way they danced. In both instances, there is an acceptable threshold of sexiness underlying these discourses, until which the attractiveness of the female body represents respectable ethnic heritage, and beyond which it becomes immodest and disreputable. Specifically, Latinas were negatively assessed when it came to dancing reggaeton, a style of Latin urban music whose aesthetic and lyrics are reminiscent of hip-hop and contemporary R’n’B. Most popular among young people in Latin America and the USA, reggaeton has, like hip-hop, been criticised for objectifying and denigrating women. For instance Galluci (2008:86) notes that “[t]he women who participate in the choreographies possess an exuberant anatomy and dress in a sexy way and with few clothes: revealing skirts, shorts and low-cut necklines are indispensable” [my translation]. Carballo Villagra (2006:41) argues that the hypersexual, violent, and sexist lyrics produce symbolic violence against women, which she contextualises within the historical marginalisation and exclusion of women in Latin

America and within the current situation characterised by, inter alia, domestic violence and the objectification of women in the media.¹⁰⁰

At an ELA staff meeting, dance teacher Pamela once remarked that her (female) students “**like reggaeton a lot.**” At their request, they were working on a reggaeton choreography, which had given her the “opportunity to talk about gender and domestic violence, but without presenting men simply as the aggressors and women as the victims” (Fieldnotes 07/11/09). When Holly and other primary-school-aged girls danced reggaeton as part of an ELA show, it did not index sexuality. However, the dance associated with reggaeton, *perreo* (dancing doggystyle), is highly suggestive; as the name implies, it involves the woman having her back to the man and leaning forward, with both partners grinding (see the logo of reggaeton.co.uk in Figure 6.3).



Figure 6.3 Representation of *perreo* in the logo of reggaeton.co.uk

For the female participants aged 16-20, reggaeton elicited mixed reactions. On the one hand, it was a very popular style of music, commonly played in Latin clubs and with friends, and therefore part of their social life. On the other hand, it involved practices with which they were not always comfortable. For instance, Tatiana (17, Ecuadorian) stated that she disliked reggaeton because “**it is an offense against women.**” This seemed to refer to the lyrics and not *perreo*, as when I asked her what she thought about the way of dancing reggaeton, she justified it by saying: “**being Latin, we are used to dancing like that, aren’t we?**” However she qualified this by adding that “**there are times when they go too far and I don’t like that**” (Interview 27/02/09). Bibiana (17, Colombian) enjoyed listening to reggaeton but she claimed that she would not dance it with anyone but her boyfriend, because she considered it to be a very intimate dance. By contrast, she described how her friends did not have the same compunction and danced it with anyone (“*con él que sea bailan,*” Interview 21/11/09). She attributed her discriminating behaviour to the teachings of her mother, Ángela:

- | | | |
|-------|---------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 34.42 | Bibiana | my mum has always told us |
| | | “don’t don’t go and dance really close-up” |
| 34.50 | | “don’t let them touch you” |
| 34.58 | | but I think that other mums |

¹⁰⁰ However Galluci (2008:89-90) observes that reggaeton artists have defended their lyrics against accusations of sexism, claiming that their slang was misunderstood. For critical analyses of the lyrics of reggaeton, see Carballo Villagra (2006); Galluci (2008); Urdaneta García (2010).

they don't even think about it *
 they don't even think "careful with this"
 or "care- don't go and do this"
 they don't tell them anything
 "ah have fun" and "bye"

35.07

Data extract 6.J Interview with Bibiana (21/11/09)

Likewise, Cinthya (16, Peruvian) highlighted the neglectful or negative influence of Latina mothers on their daughters: she was critical of mothers who encouraged their daughters to go out clubbing with them and who **"influence the girls so that they are only pretty"** (Interview 28/01/09). While Tatiana and Bibiana had expressed distaste at most, Cinthya's account of reggaeton sounded fairly traumatic. Contrasting her experiences in Spain, where dancing salsa had been "safe," Cinthya described how "horrible" it had been to watch people dance reggaeton in London – "like having dry sex in the middle of the dance floor" (ibid.). She had been especially shocked to see some of her female friends dance in such a way, and linked their embodied practices to their academic aspirations:

45.57 Cinthya they don't respect themselves
 the body they don't value themselves
 they la-
 they think that they are
 they are useless as persons to think
 and to do better
 and go to college or school
 the only thing that they are good in them
 that they can do good
 is like dance
 look good
 have boyfriends
 full stop
 and I
 I think that's so bad
 because most Latin American people
 are focused on that in this
 between 13 and 16 17
 46.27 that's what they think

Data extract 6.K Interview with Cinthya (28/01/09)

Cinthya continued by revealing that one of her friends dancing inappropriately had become pregnant at the age of 15. She was not the only one, as Cinthya stated emphatically: "I got so many friends that got pregnant – Latin girls" (ibid.). Similarly, Mandana reported that the majority of Latinas of her age (20), whom she knew, already had children – with many being single mothers (Interview 20/11/09).¹⁰¹ In fact, several adult and teenage

¹⁰¹ Mandana lived in Lambeth. The boroughs of Lambeth and Southwark have the highest concentrations of Latin Americans in the capital (14% and 15% respectively, McIlwaine et al. 2011); they are also two of the five local authorities with the highest rates of underage pregnancy in England.

participants claimed that underage pregnancies were common among Latinas in London. For example, at ELA, the director told me about a pupil, aged 13, who had become pregnant, left ELA, and kept the baby, while a Colombian parent described how her niece had had two children by the age of 15 (Fieldnotes 23/05/09, 14/11/09).¹⁰²

For most of the women participants in this chapter, dancing, from traditional to contemporary forms, was a very enjoyable activity. It was also central to student performances at ELA and, for some, essentialised as something that Latinos do naturally well. Beyond the proud cultural and marketable heritage that Latin dances represent, dancing was also an area where Latinas were judged to behave in an unrespectable manner. Specifically, the excessive display of sexuality while dancing reggaeton was deemed inappropriate. The perceived over-sexualisation of London Latinas was also conveyed through multiple accounts of teenage pregnancies.

6.6 Discussion

The accounts of young Latinas revealed marked heterogeneity, as there were few discernable patterns according to variables such as age, country of origin, and migratory trajectory. So, for instance, rejection of plastic surgery (as an example of discursive position) and occasional display of a hyperfeminine aesthetic (as an example of observable behaviour) were not correlated to nationality or level of education. Their accounts were shaped by experiences of life in London, Latin America, and Spain, which enabled these young women to align with or differentiate themselves from multiple Others (e.g. relatives in Latin America, Latinas in Madrid, Latinas in London).

Previous studies investigating the perspectives of Latina migrants have focused on inter-group relations, that is, Latinas' reactions to the way they are received and perceived by the host population. Lundström (2006) and Mas Giral (2011) both report that women of Latin American descent had to contend with eroticising stereotypes of Latinas in Sweden and in the UK respectively. For example, in her study of Latin Americans in the North of England, Mas Giral (2011:173) describes how a Chilean woman, in her 40s, felt objectified and

Source: 'London's Poverty Profile', Trust for London. Retrieved 25/05/11 from <http://www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk>

¹⁰² Yet for someone like Liliana (18, Colombian), who had failed at secondary school and was not being challenged at college, motherhood represented a positive alternative to what was probably going to be the low-paid, low-skilled job market. She told me that she recognised that it was important to study in order to be able to support a child economically. Her mother had had her at the age of 17, which Liliana considered a mistake because her mother had had to leave school and forego many things. Despite this, and with, by her own admission, no discernable career opportunities ahead of her, what Liliana really wanted was to have a baby (Interview 13/03/09).

othered by the expectations of her English husband's social circle that she was a "hot lady," who dances "with passion." However this thesis departs from these studies by documenting the construction of a gendered social imaginary, in other words, how they imagine and represent their ethnic peers. In the data collected as part of this study there were practically no spontaneous references to the attitudes or pre-conceptions of *non-Latinos* towards Latinas. In reply to my question, two young women mentioned that Londoners responded to their Colombian origin by saying things like "Latin lover," but their comments and tone of voice indicated more lassitude at a hackneyed stereotype than distress about eroticisation (Interview with Monika & Yesika 12/08/09). In fact, accounts of feeling objectified or degraded were related to the attention of *Colombian men*, both in Colombia and in London. This distinction is probably due to two key differences between London and Stockholm and the North of England. Firstly, London is far more diverse and multiethnic, which means Latinas do not stand out particularly as an exotic 'Other' and hence may be less likely to report being stereotyped as hypersexualised. Secondly, the Latin American community in London is far greater in size, which means that participants had far more access to Latino social networks and hence were more likely to attend to intra-group rather than inter-group relations in their accounts.

In this section, my aim is to go beyond the trope of the 'beautiful/sexy Latina' and to give a multi-layered understanding of its meaning in the London context. I argue that it is necessary to contextualise this trope within (a) 'polycentric pressures,' ranging from patriarchal norms in Latin America to the current objectification of women and sexualisation of culture in the UK, (b) classed processes which position certain feminine attributes and practices as respectable, while pathologising others, and (c) aspirational discourses. I end by situating the findings of this chapter within the relevant literatures.

6.6.1 'Polycentric pressures' to engage in self-objectification and self-eroticisation

Drawing on the concept of "polycentricity," through which Blommaert et al. (2005:85) refer to "simultaneous orientations to different 'centres' of authority and normativity," I suggest that young women of Latin American descent in London find themselves at the confluence of 'polycentric pressures' to engage in self-objectification and self-eroticisation. I now examine each of these broad social processes in turn.

Latin American patriarchal norms

For participants, the pressures to look good applied to Latin American women, but not to men; for them, this gender imbalance was unremarkable and thus, I contend, a sign of symbolic violence. Skeggs (2004b:16) argues that “the value of femininity needs to be analysed in relation to masculine domination and valued accordingly.” Here, women investing time and money into beautification meant that men could then take pride in their appearance and this could serve to enhance their social status. For example, when I asked Liliana (18, Colombian) if Latin American men *expected* women to look impeccable, she replied that the experience she had had with young Latinos in London was that, **“for them, a woman has to have an excellent body so that they can show her off everywhere”** (Interview 13/03/09). As a result, such masculine demands and feminine efforts with regards to the display of a particular body aesthetic need to be contextualised within the patriarchal norms that have traditionally regimented Latin American societies (Chant 2003; Dore 1997). Cicerchia (1997:125) notes that, until recently, “[g]ender relations were still dominated by asymmetric forces that not only excluded women from decision-making opportunities but also, and even more importantly, generated inclusion mechanisms that condemned them to positions of subordination and high vulnerability.” Consequently, the desire to look pleasing to the male gaze (by, e.g., looking sexy) acquires value and meaning in a system of gender roles still significantly shaped by patriarchy. Moreover, the exaltation of the feminine – hyperfemininity – is the mirror image of hypermasculinity, which, in turn, characterises machismo (see Chant 2003; Melhuus and Stølen 1996; McIlwaine 2008a, 2008b, 2010). Chant (2003:16) argues that “to deny the existence of a cult of ‘exaggerated masculinity’ in Latin America would be inappropriate, when there is so much evidence of male domination and/or mistreatment of women.” Thus, in her study of gender ideologies among Latinos in London, McIlwaine (2010:287) found that “[i]n recalling pre-migration regimes, women migrants interpreted machismo as a cultural trait that denoted how men prevented women from working, controlled decision-making, and imposed their will in forceful ways.” However, this thesis departs from McIlwaine’s research, where “machismo and its everyday manifestations were discussed repeatedly by both women and men,” in that explicit mentions of machismo were rare.¹⁰³ The young women of Colombian descent studying at university did, however, criticise the sexist behaviour of Colombian men, which included openly making disparaging comments on women’s bodies and judging women according to their looks in the workplace (Interviews with Monika & Yesika 12/08/09; Silvia 27/02/10).

¹⁰³ The main exception is ELA teacher Belén (40s, Peruvian), who mentioned it when she recounted that, at her husband’s birthday party, they had a fascinating “two hour-conversation on machismo” (Fieldnotes 16/01/10), and in her 2011 wishes for Women’s Day (see Chapter 3, 3.5). The other exception is the mention made by Monika of “macho” in an email (cf. below 6.6.2).

This being said, the display of hyperfemininity is not restricted to Latinas. At ELA, for instance, I observed some women wearing very tight clothes, pronounced make-up, and heels on Saturday mornings; crucially this included Latin American *and* non Latin American women – such as Polish and Iranian mothers. Hence it is now necessary to shift the analytic gaze “beyond the ethnic lens” (Glick Schiller et al. 2006) and to pay attention to ‘post-ethnic’ social processes.

Objectification of women and sexualisation of culture in the UK

Tara’s participation in a beauty pageant (which legitimises the appraisal, ranking, and rewarding of individuals according to their looks) and her mode of fundraising (posing suggestively, as opposed to, for example, doing a sponsored run) can be seen as exemplifying the (self-) objectification of women and the sexualisation of culture in the UK (and in neoliberal economies generally; cf. the notion of ‘McSexualisation’).¹⁰⁴ Phenomena such as the resurgence of beauty contests, the normalisation of pornographic imagery, and the increasing popularity of plastic surgery have attracted attention from scholars (cf. McRobbie 2009; Gill & Scharff 2011), feminist commentators (cf. Walter 2010), and the authorities (cf. Papadopoulos 2010 and Bailey 2011, reports on the sexualisation of young people respectively commissioned by Labour and Conservative governments). These authors have identified several factors contributing to a culture where there is intensifying pressure on young women and girls to conform to the image of a sexually attractive and sexually confident person. The circulation of hypersexualised images and behaviour, especially of women, has soared and is now readily accessible through mass media. Girls are encouraged to engage in processes of grooming and beautification from an early age, with Papadopoulos (2010:6) noting that “exposure to this [hypersexualised] imagery leads to body surveillance, or the constant monitoring of personal appearance”, and McRobbie (2009:62) observing that “[t]he young woman is congratulated, reprimanded and encouraged to embark on a new regime of self-perfectibility (i.e., self-completion).”

The expectations that women *should* look attractive and even sexy are far from being limited to young women; at all stages of the social hierarchy, women are still subjected to such pressures, which are manifest in the criticisms from other women. A recent incident illustrates how even successful women in positions of power not contingent on their looks are still at the mercy of objectifying and evaluating discourses. A high-profile female adviser

¹⁰⁴ Jyrkinen (2005) coined the term ‘McSexualisation’ to refer to the McDonaldisation of sex or, in other words, “the sale and consumption of guaranteed sex(ual) service like any other asset or service” (p.34); see also Jyrkinen (forthcoming): ‘McSexualisation of Bodies, Sex and Sexualities: Mainstreaming the Commodification of Gendered Inequalities.’

to the Cameron government was quoted as saying in celebrity magazine *Heat*: “If I were PM, I’d restyle all those women, I mean, the female cabinet, what an ugly bunch” (BBC 11/01/11). Drawing on the stereotype of the dowdy British woman and the opposite stereotype of the stylish and sexy Frenchwoman, she commented: “[French women are] like, wow, aren’t they? What do we have? I’d say let’s just put a bit of sex and glamour in there” (ibid.). She later apologised for her comments in the broadsheet *The Daily Telegraph*, but her rather hollow comment that “When it comes down to it, with women and their intellect, furthering their careers is much more sexy than how they dress” (BBC 13/10/11) will be less remembered than her initial (profoundly) derogatory remarks.

The demands on women to engage in high-maintenance femininity also need to be viewed within a neoliberal, capitalist, and consumerist context, where the reliance on artificial features (e.g., hair dye, make-up) and ongoing dissatisfaction with the body are encouraged, in order to sustain the purchase of products and services offered by the beauty industry (cf. Gill & Scharff 2011). These services are now more likely to include invasive procedures: plastic surgery has been rising in the UK, with breast augmentation being the most popular procedure among teenage girls (Papadopoulos 2010:54). Indeed, the ubiquity of digitally manipulated images and the widespread use of plastic surgery by celebrities encourage a conception of the body as a text that can be edited (cf. Guix 2008) and normalise a technologically-enhanced female body (cf. Hogle 2005). They also propagate globally a uniform feminine ideal sculpted by plastic surgery – an industry which is dominated by Western standards of feminine beauty (Negrin 2001:27).¹⁰⁵

Furthermore, according to Walter (2010:36), the mainstreaming of the sex industry has coincided with a point in history when there is much less social mobility than in previous generations. It is therefore not surprising, she argues, that the ideal promoted by the sex industry – that status can be won by any woman if she is prepared to flaunt her body – is now finding fertile ground among many young women (ibid.), who see surgically-enhanced glamour model Jordan as a role-model, and view glamour modelling and becoming a WAG as desirable pathways to fame and fortune (p. 25).¹⁰⁶ Indeed, in their study of glamour modelling, the self-sexualisation of young women, and the surrounding discourses of empowerment and objectification, Coy & Garner (2010:671) conclude that “young women

¹⁰⁵ For an overview of dominant theoretical approaches in the literature on body ideals and, in particular, the body beautiful, see Reischer & Koo (2004). For a comparison of American and British women’s accounts of cosmetic surgery procedures, see Gimlin (2007).

¹⁰⁶ The acronym WAG stands for Wife and Girlfriend and commonly refers to the partner of high-profile and high-earning football players (and, by extension, of other sportsmen). The term can evoke a woman of modest origins now living a high-spending existence centred on shopping and fashion, and who has remodelled her body with plastic surgery. It corresponds exactly to the lifestyle pursued by the adolescent protagonists of *Sin Tetas No Hay Paraíso* (cf. 3.7), except that the providers of such a standard of living are footballers, rather than drug-traffickers.

are increasingly ‘becoming’ through discourses of the sexualised self and body as marketable and profitable.” Yet the pressures to engage in self-eroticisation are not restricted to young women with no access to institutionalised or symbolic capital: in her investigation, Walter (2010:26) found that “[u]niversity students are just as likely to meet this [sexualised] culture as are young women in an Essex nightclub.” Here, although Walter is drawing attention to commonality (encounters with sexualised culture), she is also, implicitly, drawing on a *contrastive* cultural image: that of university, with its connotations of intellectuality and respectability, and that of a nightclub, which indexes hedonism and, by dint of being an *Essex* nightclub, a degree of crassness and lower class-ness. Bearing this in mind, I now examine the similarities between the image of ‘Essex Girls’ in popular culture and the negative representations of Latinas in the data.

6.6.2 From ‘Essex Girls’ to ‘Excessive Latinas’: pathologising representations of femininity

Following a conversation about plastic surgery, Yesika (20, Colombian) recounted how, when their cousin moved from London to Dagenham – a “solidly working-class area in the borderlands of East London and Essex” (Jones 2011:227) –, she told them “it’s just like Colombia!” (Fieldnotes 12/06/11). When I later asked Yesika’s twin sister what their cousin had meant exactly, Monika sent me the following message:

What she meant..(And I would say Essex as a whole...I think...like the Essex girl image..) is that they strive for the perfect body image like they do in Colombia.. Plastic surgery is a norm there like it is in Colombia..the women are perfect they have to wear the best clothes..always have makeup...very madeup.. Everything is very superficial...plus it’s a very macho environment..the women have to look good for the men...

Data extract 6.L Personal email from Monika (16/06/11)

Here, a comparison was made between ‘Essex Girls’ and *colombianas*. Participants spoke of *colombianas* and Latinas, sometimes switching between the two terms in conversation so that it was difficult to ascertain whether they were considered to be synonymous (cf. Data extract 6.E for an example). On several occasions, a participant started by describing Latin Americans generally, and then went on to describe how a particular trait or practice was more prevalent or more extreme among Colombians. For example, when Tatiana (17, Ecuadorian) was talking about reggaeton, she first referred to “*latinos*,” before specifying that the mode of dress associated with reggaeton was “**more for Colombians**,” who “**focus more on the body** [*la figura*]” (Interview 27/02/09). While it is true that certain beautifying and sexualised practices were deemed to be more visible or more pronounced among

Colombians, *they were not restricted to them*. Often, participants spoke of Colombians because these were the people they knew and socialised with (Colombians form the most populous group of Spanish-speaking Latinos in London, cf. Section 2.2.1). Hence, since there were also references to Ecuadorians and Venezuelans with relation to, for example, beauty contests, I contend that, instead of focusing on *colombianas*, it is worth thinking more broadly in terms of Latinas.

Whereas looking attractive, dancing, and motherhood were highly valued by participants, looking *too* sexy (especially in inappropriate contexts like school), dancing *too* suggestively, and having babies *too* early, were almost *excessively* Latin American, and ill-fitting within the London context. To capture this set of practices, I suggest the term ‘Excessive Latina,’ although it is necessary to highlight that this is an ‘analytic type’ derived from this dataset, and not a trope as definably part of popular culture as the ‘Essex Girl’ is in the UK. The Colombian stereotype of the *pereirana* (woman from Pereira, in the *paisa* region) is similar to the ‘Essex Girl,’ in that there are jokes about her stupidity and her promiscuity (cf. Bialowas Pobutsky 2010), stereotypes which were reinforced by the television series *Sin Tetas No Hay Paraíso*, set in Pereira (cf. Section 3.7).¹⁰⁷ However, the focus here will not be on a national stereotype but on a supranational, panethnic Latina.

As Monika’s email suggests, there are similarities between ‘Essex Girls’ and ‘Excessive Latinas’ in terms of how they are represented. Firstly, there is appearance. Both favour looking “spectacularly feminine,” to borrow McRobbie’s phrase (2009:60), by seeking a hyperfeminine look (e.g., tight and revealing clothes, pronounced make-up, false nails), and engaging in processes of whitening (e.g. blonde hair dye) and ‘browning’ (i.e. fake tan). This artificial aesthetic is further intensified by the use of plastic surgery, as has already been demonstrated in the case of ‘Excessive Latinas.’ In the UK, the association between plastic surgery and ‘Essex Girls’ has been cemented by the TV series ‘The Only Way is Essex,’ whose participants’ cosmetic procedures have been widely publicised.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, a high-profile plastic surgery practice has stated that “One of the biggest areas for cosmetic surgery is Essex” and that demand has risen since the launch of the TV series.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ See Bialowas Pobutsky (2010) for an interesting analysis of the *Sin Tetas No Hay Paraíso* cultural phenomenon and of the trope of the promiscuous *pereirana*, from the national origins of the stereotype to the very real and global trafficking of *pereiranas* (and other *paisas*) as prostitutes in Europe and Asia. For a case-study of ethnicity, gender, education, and language among two Colombian women working as prostitutes in Japan, see Castro-Vázquez (2011).

¹⁰⁸ ‘The Only Way is Essex’ is a semi-reality show, based in Essex, which has been running on ITV since 2010. When consulted, the main female protagonists all appeared to work in the beauty industry (e.g. as models, a beautician, and fashion and lingerie store owners). Retrieved 16/11/11 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Only_Way_Is_Essex Wikipedia.

¹⁰⁹ “Cosmetic surgery Essex has risen since The only way is Essex has launched with major success, many of the cast having had some form of surgery or beauty treatment has made many Essex girls and boys want to copy the look with fake eye fans or Eye lashes if you can call them that and fake tan.

Secondly, there is the way in which they are associated with the body and not the mind: both are associated with over-sexualised behaviour and low academic achievement. Cinthya's depiction of hedonistic Latinas who only want to "dance, look good, have boyfriends" is reminiscent of the "clubbing femininity" coined by Archer & Francis (2005:174) to describe the lifestyle associated with "white/black girls" and which consists of "going out to night clubs, drinking and engaging in heterosexual relationships" (ibid.). Within Western educational discourse, constructions of 'successful' pupil identity are predicated on a Cartesian dualism (a mind-body split), where the 'demonised' pupil is seen as hyper(hetero)sexualised (Archer 2008). In a school context, the 'Excessive Latina' and the 'Essex Girl' correspond to the traditional conception of the 'bad student,' who displays and orients towards physicality rather than intellectuality, and whose performances of style are viewed as "antithetical to a 'good' pupil subject position and [detract] from pupils' interest and investment in education" (Archer 2008:101).

Thirdly, there are teenage pregnancies, with which they are both associated (cf. Skeggs 2005b for the case of the 'Essex Girl'). In both cases, the condemnation of young mothers reproduces the discourse that vilifies teenage motherhood and associates it "with failed femininity and with disregard for the well-being of the child," going against the Western "concept of planned motherhood," which encourages young women to "postpone early maternity to accrue the economic advantages of employment and occupational identity and thus contribute to the solving of the crisis of welfare" (McRobbie 2009:85). The denigration of *single* motherhood also echoes the discourse that constructs single mothers as incomplete family units that require the assistance of the state. As Skeggs (2004a:88) observes, recalling how former Labour politician Peter Mandelson deplored young women having "babies instead of careers," "[t]he sign of the 'single mother' once operated as that onto which all dependency, fecundity, and disorder was crystallized."

In sum, the representation of the 'Essex Girl' and the 'Excessive Latina' is characterised by four main features: a hyperfeminine and cosmetically/technologically-enhanced aesthetic, a 'bad student' position, over-sexualised behaviour, and teenage motherhood. To a lesser degree, these characteristics are also associated with the female 'white trash' in the USA. In these *translocal cultural narratives*, the display of a hyperfeminine body and of over-sexualised practices is demonised only so far as the women are seen as occupying a low social position. As Skeggs (2005b:970-971) argues, "[t]he central characters in *Sex and the City* can offset sexual pathology through professionalism; they are unlikely to be read as

The whole fake look or ultra glam has been welcomed with open arms in Essex where most Essex teenagers would fit in well with the LA Hollywood crowd" (24/08/11). Retrieved 16/11/11 from <http://harleystreetsurgery.com/forum/archives/cosmetic-surgery-essex>.

‘Essex girls’, as Manolo Blahnik shoes replace white plastic stilettos.” Hence, it is hyperfemininity and over-sexualisation *without* wealth or professionalism or academic success that is pathologised as *embodied excess*. This can be read as the pathologising of working-class femininities (Skeggs 1997, 2004a), as “[t]he working class have a long history of being represented by excess, whilst the middle class are represented by their distance from it, usually through associations with restraint, repression, reasonableness, modesty and denial” (Skeggs 2004a:99). As a result, Skeggs argues that the representations of the working class “have absolutely nothing to do with the working class themselves, but are about the middle class creating value for themselves in a myriad of ways, through distance, denigration, and disgust as well as appropriation and affect of attribution” (ibid., p.118).

The term ‘working-class’ is appropriate for describing the stereotype of the ‘Essex girl,’ which is just one example of how White working-class women have been portrayed and denigrated in the British media (cf. Jones 2011; Skeggs 2005b; Tyler & Bennett 2010). However, bearing in mind the “peculiarly British obsession with class” (Savage 1995:17), I believe that there is a danger of hasty re-contextualisation by applying terms like ‘working-class’ – whose history and imagery are very much grounded in the UK – to London Latinas, who exist in a transnational setting. Nevertheless, the representation of the ‘Excessive Latina’ undeniably signals *inferiorisation* insofar as certain gendered practices are coded as cheap, tasteless, and unrespectable. For these reasons, I argue that it is more appropriate to talk about the pathologisation of *lower-class* femininities in this context. With regards to the term ‘middle class,’ it should be underscored that many of the women in this sample did not occupy a middle-class position in socio-economic terms. Among the eight young women interviewed, at least four were living in modest accommodation, in a disadvantaged area, with their mother; the latter had either left school at 13 or upon completing compulsory schooling, and had worked, or was working, as a cleaner or a nursery worker. Therefore what is at stake here is not middle-class women looking down on working-class women, but women’s discursive attempts to distance themselves from pathologised lower-class femininities, and thereby to position themselves in a more respectable and thus superior location.

6.6.3 Feminine beautification and aspiration

In many societies, ‘doing beauty’ is a vital component of ‘doing’ femininity: being beautiful, as defined by the norms of a society – for example, in terms of skin type and body shape –, and working towards achieving these conventional standards are an accepted (and expected) part of what women do by virtue of being ‘women’ (Lazar 2011:37). However, in

the data, the efforts invested in female beautification were also coded in terms of *individual* and *community aspiration*. Thus, on the one hand, a discourse emerged that posited the value of beautification and self-objectification (notably in beauty contests) as a means to succeed, and to aid the integration of the Latin American community. It was apparent in the praise lavished on Tara (Miss Universe GB) in the Spanish-language media and in the Facebook support groups, as well as in the declarations of Tara and of the organisers of the Miss Ecuador UK competition (cf. Sections 6.2.1, 6.2.2). From their perspective, there was no contradiction between the pursuit of aesthetic and of academic success. Conversely, another discourse depreciated a conspicuous involvement in beautification and in beauty contests, and associated it with educational failure and with sending out a bad image of the community (cf. Section 6.4). Thus, for the three *peruanas*, the efforts to privilege beautification and desirability were negatively assessed because they were construed as synonymous with the pursuit of male attention, at the expense of self-realisation through learning. Instead, success and integration were to be achieved through practices that were congruent with schooling, such as dressing in a respectable fashion (and orienting to English). In their discourse, the prioritisation of the pursuit of institutionalised capital and educational aspiration over that of body capital and hedonism acted as a way to construct differentiation and stratification between community members.

Latina femininity was thus intrinsically linked to the image of the community, from the celebration of Tara, embraced as a symbol of the acceptance and recognition of UK Latinos, to the criticism of excessive Latinas, who brought the wrong kind of visibility for the community. This illustrates how the presentation and perceived moral standing of women can be taken to reflect on and be symbolic of the (ethnic) group / nation – a synecdochical process that has been widely observed (cf. Anthias & Yuval-Davis 1989; Dwyer 2000; Espiritu 2001; Nagel 2003). In particular, mothers were assigned an important role in the transmission and maintenance of moral and cultural norms. Thus, for some Colombian young women, mothers inculcating the need to look pretty were portrayed as respectable and as passing on valuable ethnocultural heritage. Conversely, mothers were blamed for neglecting to prepare their daughters for sexualised encounters, notably in the case of dancing the sexually explicit dance *perreo* to reggaeton music, and for inciting their daughters to go clubbing. Similarly, teenage mothers were condemned for embodying unrestrained sexuality and failed educational aspirations.

6.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, Latinas, and particularly *colombianas*, were found to be represented in terms of attractiveness, beautification, and seduction, which is consonant with the trope of the ‘sexy Latina,’ also part of a ‘global Latin brand.’ Looking beyond a strictly ‘ethnic lens,’ I argued that it is important to situate these representations within a transnational context partly shaped by Latin American patriarchal pressures, the objectification of women and sexualisation of culture in the UK, the translocal pathologisation of lower-class femininities, and aspirational discourses. Overall, the accounts of young Latina women from the 1.5 generation revealed processes of hierarchisation and stratification whereby embodied practices (linked to appearance and dancing) were coded as sanitised and respectable, or excessive and unrespectable. Performances of feminine *latinidad* were thus found to be contested, plural, and related to locality (e.g. the *paisa* region in Colombia, the Ecuadorian sierra, London). Furthermore, these accounts threw into relief tensions regarding which type(s) of capital – body, linguistic, and cultural – could be legitimised in a London setting and could acquire exchange value in contexts such as school and the dance floor.

As was the case with language practices in the previous chapter, feminine appearance was used here as a feature through which to evaluate and categorise community members, and to signal affiliation with or distance from ethnic identification. Whereas the command and the use of Spanish were validated as signifiers of authentic ethnic belonging in Chapter 5, beautification and self-eroticisation attracted ambivalent responses, ranging from pride and legitimation to resistance and denigration. As in all the preceding chapters, to various degrees, the question of community recognition was significant; here some participants expressed concern over whether their co-ethnics would bring the right or wrong kind of visibility through their embodied and sexualised practices. Throughout this thesis, both linguistic and embodied practices have served to authenticate ethnic heritage, display ethnic identification, and create moral hierarchies within the ‘imagined community.’ Moreover they have functioned as a conduit through which families could seek to transmit and purchase linguistic, cultural, and social capital. In the next and final chapter, I review these findings and discuss how they form part of the discursive construction of a localised *latinidad*, and outline the empirical and conceptual contributions that this study makes to existing literatures.

Chapter 7 – Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

Investigating how migrants and their descendents make sense of their experience, and how they position themselves in the receiving country, is important for understanding the socio-cultural dynamics of migration in an increasingly globalised world. In particular it is valuable to probe at how individuals choose to form groups, and how they construct sameness and negotiate difference within these groups. With regards to migrants from Spanish-speaking countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru, it is as the result of the process of migration that the pan-ethnic label ‘Latin American’ acquires most relevance, and becomes a prime category of ascription and identification. The vast majority of scholarship on Latin American migrants, and on the representation of ‘Latin American-ness’ (*latinidad*), has been carried out in the USA; however, the rise in numbers of migrants from Latin America in Europe has called for further research into their trajectories. In London, Latin Americans constitute a growing but still relatively invisible, ‘new migrant group,’ which has attracted scholarly attention predominantly concerned with questions of integration and transnationalism among adults. This study addresses a gap in the existing literature by tackling some of the issues concerning families with children, such as the transmission of language skills within the family, and the articulation of Latina womanhood among young women from the 1.5 generation. Furthermore, the question of how Latin American migrants imagine their community has not been properly explored beyond accounts of mistrust, envy, and exploitation in the workplace (Block 2008; Cock 2009; McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011). The broad aim of this thesis has been to explore how migrants from Latin American countries construct the idea of ‘Latin American community’ and *latinidad* in their discourse, and to what ends and outcomes. In particular it has sought to chart how ‘outside’ cultural images mesh with ‘inside’ portrayals of the Latino community, and to situate these discursive representations within a transnational context, informed by global and local ideologies about ethnicity, language, and gender. In doing so, it has problematised the notion of ‘Latin American community’ and underlined the role of semiotic practices (related to language and the body) in the ways in which *latinidad* is negotiated and contested.

This thesis used an ethnographic approach in order to develop an in-depth, contextualised understanding of a small group of participants, as well as to be able to respond to

developments and to attend to issues as they emerged during data collection. Participant-observation and semi-structured interviews (n=25) took place at and around a Latin American complementary school, as well as at community events, family homes, and an FE college. The majority of participants were female and Colombian. As a result of the chosen methodology and of the contingencies of fieldwork, this study was able to focus on questions hitherto unexamined by the literature on Latin Americans in London: the roles and functioning of a Latin American school, language ideological discourses about Latino families, and ethnicising and moralising discourses about Latinas.

This final chapter pulls together the findings from the three analytic chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6), the theoretical chapter (Chapter 2) and the introductory chapter (Chapter 1). In the second section it reviews the empirical findings related to ELA and to Latinas, highlighting how these contribute to furthering knowledge and understanding of London Latino/as, as well as to literature on complementary schools and gender and migration (Section 7.2). The third section discusses how this thesis has operationalized and developed the concept of *latinidad* in relation to the theory of capital. The chapter ends by making recommendations for research that could build on this thesis (Section 7.3).

7.2 Empirical findings and contributions

7.2.1 ELA

As argued in Chapter 2, ethnicity constitutes one of the fundamental ways in which to conceptualise and categorise individuals in the UK. The population is thereby theorised in terms of ‘majority’ and ‘minority,’ with the latter term connoting smaller numbers but also different characteristics and needs from the mainstream (Alexander 2007; Taylor 1997). Information is collected on minorities in order to allocate appropriate resources, with priority given according to demonstrable size and disadvantage. As a result, groups who identify as different from the majority are encouraged to establish that their numbers are sufficient to be recognised as a distinct ethnic minority by government agencies, and that enough of their members suffer from social problems that they warrant special attention, and hence are entitled to specific funding (cf. Nagle 2009). Furthermore groups need to invoke the claim of ‘most need’ and to show that they are deserving of public resources in order to help contest negative stereotyping (ibid.). Consequently, in a climate shaped by ethnopolitics (Rothschild 1981), there are strong incentives for individuals to ally under an ethnic banner (Baumann 1999; Blommaert 2008; Brubaker 2004; Nagel 1994) and to articulate a group narrative that

will resonate with the ethno-moral framework of multiculturalism, notably by resorting to strategic essentialism (Spivak 1984). In other words, there are advantages for people to group themselves around a sense of shared ethnic identity in order to establish themselves and their group as visible and, ultimately, deserving of recognition and resources. In London, this has meant that activists have waged a campaign for the ‘ethnic recognition’ of Latin Americans, i.e. that a specific Latin American category become part of ethnic monitoring.

The aim of Chapter 4 was to investigate how a Latin American school – ELA – articulated its purpose and remit, in order to identify how it responded to this ethnopolitical context, and how it represented the Latin American community. This study found that, in official texts aimed at funders and families, ELA mobilised discursive strategies consonant with state-sponsored multiculturalism: these stressed social disadvantage and aimed to increase take-up, so as to enhance the visibility of the Latin American community. Given the research documenting and the discourse pathologising the disproportionately low attainment of certain ethnic minorities (cf. Archer & Francis 2007; DCSF 2006; DES (Swann Report) 1985), organisations seeking to enhance the school achievement of children from such groups can be seen to be bringing valuable “social goods” (Gee 2011). Consequently I argued that ELA highlighted its credentials as an ethnic minority charity, working towards the relief of poverty, as well as the social integration and educational achievement of BEM families. In addition it benefited from a discourse of ‘intergenerational gap’ within minority families, which posits a breakdown in communication between generations because of asymmetrical language proficiency and language use. ELA also sought to gain credibility by positioning itself as a grassroots Latin American project, working towards the preservation and transmission of its rich cultural heritage.

By promoting the positive aspects of Latin American culture, ELA could be seen to be counteracting the negative discourses that associate Latin America with danger and instability, and portray the London Latino community as unscrupulous and fragmented. Moreover, by evoking the attraction and popularity of Latin American heritage, ELA was contributing to a discourse that constructs the London Latino community as a valuable part of the London mosaic. Indeed, the desirability and marketability of its cultural practices (e.g. salsa, carnival) can be seen to enhance the appeal of London as multicultural hub and consequently were praised by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (Chapters 1 and 2). Ethnic minority businesses and organisations such as ELA could thereby be seen to be providing

forms of cultural consumption that act as marketable assets for London as a global city (cf. Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2009).

The linguistic and artistic aspects of this cultural heritage were found to be the reason why ELA advertised, not just within the Latin American community, but also to the general public. In Chapter 5, it was observed that part of the school community was not Latin American (i.e. did not originate from there) or BEM. These parents were motivated by the desire for their child to acquire extra linguistic and cultural capital, rather than to discover their 'roots' or socialise with their co-ethnics. These findings speak to the debate on the role of complementary schools and whether they are organisations catering for parents who are minoritized / underprivileged or middle-class / aspirant (Chapter 4), by suggesting that ELA appealed to a range of families. More pragmatically, ELA was also reported to function as a cheap childcare option, for both Latinos and non-Latinos. Although the non-Latin American children seemed well-integrated, some tensions were observed between their parents and the staff. For instance, some Latin American parents resented the fact that the teacher spoke English in class in order to explain the homework to non-Spanish-speaking parents. Such tensions were not acknowledged by the director and Spanish remained the official language of the school.

The finding that ELA functioned as more than a Latin American community organisation makes several contributions to the complementary school literature. Firstly, the approach taken here (investigating official representations and the ethno-political context) can be said to be original, given that other studies have predominantly focused on, inter alia, pedagogy (Walters 2010), classroom interaction (Blackledge & Creese 2010), and the perspectives of pupils, parents and teachers (Archer et al. 2009; Archer & Francis 2006). Secondly, the studies reviewed in Chapter 4 portray complementary schools as organisations aimed at, and catering for, a specific ethnolinguistic community (e.g. Chinese in Francis et al. 2006, 2009; Bangladeshi in Blackledge & Creese 2010). Although by no means does this imply that such communities were linguistically or socially homogeneous, it does mean that staff and families were seen as belonging to a common ethnic group. In this thesis, ELA was found to be aimed at the Latin American community and the general public. This occurred because it was under pressure to emphasise, officially, its ethnic specificity and authenticity in order to win the funding stakes in the 'multicultural game,' while seeking to be inclusive, arguably for both principled reasons (not wanting to be ghettoised and wanting to foster "*convivencia*" – coexistence) and financial reasons (wanting to attract as many fee-paying families as possible). These findings draw attention to the difficult situation faced by

community organisations like ELA, facing funding cuts as well as a lack of consistent state support for minority languages and bilingual education. Thirdly, these findings problematise conclusions from previous research on complementary schools inasmuch as they suggest that these may be seen, not just as ethnic community institutions, but also as pluralist spaces, where the motivations of parents and of the school are potentially multiple and discordant, and where the presence of certain families is effectively erased (Irvine & Gal 2000) from the day-to-day discourse of the school. By highlighting how the economic imperative is stronger than the level of disjuncture caused by the desire for ethnic exclusivity *and* pluralist pragmatism, they echo the research of Heller (2006) on a francophone school in Ontario. Furthermore they resonate with her more recent work on Quebecois organisations (Heller 2011) in that they point to the neoliberal commodification and de-ethnicisation of community practices, although they differ from Heller's work by being related to a global city.

I now move from institutional representations of ELA and their implications for its ethnolinguistic composition, to how ethnicity and language were construed as mutually constitutive among staff and parents. The aim of Chapter 5 was to explore the impact of language ideologies on how Latino families were represented among adults at ELA. This study found that, in line with dominant language ideological discourses linking language proficiency with ethnic and national affiliation (Anderson 2006; Gal & Irvine 1995), family language practices played an important role in discourses about community membership. Thus, Spanish was erected as the 'mother tongue' and 'community language' – terms reflecting the highly symbolic and emotive role it is invested with (Leung, Harris & Rampton 1997; Pavlenko 2005). In other words it was portrayed as an iconic (Irvine & Gal 2000) representation of *latinidad*, which reflects a common process in complementary schools (Blackledge & Creese 2010).

In the conversations held with parents and teachers, as well as in the interactions between them that were observed, speaking Spanish with relatives and other community members was considered to be a necessary and integral part of being Latino. Not succeeding in teaching Spanish to your child was associated with a sense of failure, and even guilt/shame. This was evidenced by a mother's self-deprecating description of her daughter's proficiency as that of a "*gringuita*," a label which suggests that accent was important, and that the 'right' kind of accent indexed a Latin American, and not Anglo, descent. However, this study found that teaching Spanish to your children and imposing it in the home was not without difficulty for Latin American families. Socioeconomic factors, such as working long hours and

parenting without the right knowledge and support structure, were evoked as extenuating circumstances. In addition, it was notable that pupils, practically all of whom had been born and/or brought up in London, were found to orient unquestionably towards English. This preference for the local language tallies with the literatures on complimentary schools (Archer et al. 2009; Çavuşoğlu 2010; Walters 2010) and on second generation migrants more generally (Fishman 1989; Portes & Rumbaut 2001), as well as with Bourdieu's (1991) work on the symbolic domination of the language made legitimate by standardisation and institutionalisation.

The combination of occupational constraints, lack of parenting/linguistic expertise, and the dominance of English in London led parents to allow their child to reply to them in English, or to mix Spanish and English (Spanglish). In line with purist ideologies according to which the mixing of languages is seen as damaging to the 'correct' command of languages (cf. Gafaranga 2007; Zentella 1997), such practices were criticised and associated with a fear of 'intergenerational language gap,' whereby communication, and ultimately rapport, between generations would be stymied by asymmetrical proficiency. Notwithstanding the strength of this ideology in adult and institutional discourses, asymmetrical communication was widely observed between adults and children, and some of the teachers recognised that they also mixed Spanish and English. The concern about, yet widespread use of, Spanglish echoes the findings of McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker (2011) on the language practices of second generation Latinos in London. More generally the normality of such non-canonical language practices is in line with previous research on migrant communities (Bailey 2007b; Harris 2006; Zentella 1997) and on the hybridisation of cultural and linguistic practices in multi-ethnic countries like the UK (Hall 1992; Mercer 1994; Rampton 2005).

In addition this study found that ethnic actualisation through language occurred not just as the result of knowing how to speak Spanish, but choosing to speak it with fellow Latinos. The decision on the part of adult Latinos to prioritise English, in the family home and with other Latinos, was associated with a lack of education, and represented as a rejection and denial of ethnic heritage, which delegitimised ethnic membership. I argued that it is necessary to contextualise these criticisms within the sociolinguistic context of Latin America, where social and linguistic orientation to Whiteness / Western-ness have long been part of aspirational strategies but may be seen as forms of cultural betrayal. More generally, these findings echo the work of Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) on how language practices are read as affiliative or disaffiliative acts of identity. These representations

crystallise the performative nature of language practices in the ascription of ethnicity, and point to how degrees of ethnicity can be attributed according to language practices.

Very little is known about language practices among Latino/as in London, apart from Block's (2006, 2008) case studies outlining the linkages between language proficiency, integration, and social position among adults, and McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker's (2011) survey providing some information on the reported proficiency in Spanish and use of Spanglish among the second generation. This ethnographic study contributes to this nascent branch of research by documenting language ideological discourses, particularly about families. Its findings delineate aspects of a Latino imaginary, where accent, language proficiency, and language orientation are used for boundary maintenance, acting as exclusionary and inclusionary devices in the co-construction of the Latin American community.

7.2.2 Latinas

Chapter 6 sought to introduce a gendered dimension to the representation of the Latin American community in London. The literature review in Chapter 2 highlighted the need to view migration as a gendered process, and identified that there was scope for examining the perspectives of migrants from the 1.5 generation, and charting the construction of a gendered social imaginary among migrants (Pessar & Mahler 2003). In order to address this gap in the literature, Chapter 6 aimed to explore how gendered, ethnicising, and stratifying discourses inform the ways in which Latinas are represented among young Colombian / Latina women from the 1.5 generation. Drawing on Crenshaw (1993) and her concept of representational intersectionality, the analysis sought to deconstruct how these representations were produced through a convergence of prevalent narratives about Latinas and women in general. This study found that Latinas were associated with attractiveness, beautification, and sexuality, a representation which coincides with the trope of tropicalism (Molina Guzmán & Valdivia 2004), according to which the Latina body is ethnicised and eroticised, and Latinas are globally portrayed in terms of physicality, provocativeness, and desirability.

This study found that Latina aesthetics were linked to aspirations in multiple ways: both at an individual and communal level, and in positive and negative terms. On the one hand, the association of Latinas with beauty and sensuality was regarded as part of valuable ethnocultural heritage and a source of pride and recognition for the community. Thus global Latina icons could contribute to the success of a 'Latin brand,' while a London Latina

undergraduate, Tara, who became national beauty queen, could act as a counter-example to corrosive stereotypes about Latinos. Tara is of Colombian descent and Colombian women were especially associated with beautification in general, and with the pursuit of plastic surgery in particular. On the other hand, the excessive investment of Latinas in beautification was negatively evaluated. Peruvian participants in particular construed it as contrary to academic achievement and to a good pupil position, and as bringing the wrong kind of visibility for the community. Like feminine appearance, dancing was found to be ethnicised and erected as a proud component of Latin American heritage, which was evident both in the prominence place it was given in school life at ELA and in the multiple ways in which it was part of the London cultural scene. As with appearance, feminine dancing could be criticised for being excessively sexual. For instance young Latinas were condemned for dancing to reggaeton too suggestively (doing *perreo*), while their mothers were blamed for relinquishing their parenting duty.

It was argued that women's accounts shared a concern for respectability (Skeggs 1997, 2004a), although their interpretation of what constituted respectable or desirable behaviour differed. It was suggested that the practices that were pathologised could be captured in the term 'Excessive Latina.' This analytic type was similar to the stereotype of the Essex Girl, also represented as hyperfeminine and cosmetically/technologically-enhanced, as a 'bad student', as a wanton woman, and as a teenage/irresponsible mother. Furthermore, it was argued that such a representation is similar to that of the female 'white trash' in the USA, and hence that such representations are not about ethnicity, but rather are translocal cultural narratives which function as stratifying discourses about women, by pathologising lower-class femininities. These findings extend the work of Skeggs by looking beyond White working-class women and applying her classed reading of respectability to transnational migrants; they also suggest that it is necessary not to constrain their accounts within a rigid working-class/middle-class dichotomy, and to account for how respectability may be constructed differently in the country/ies of origin and the country of residence.

By documenting the currency of an ethnicising discourse that associates *colombianas* / Latinas with beauty and seduction, this thesis resonates with Román-Velásquez's (1999) London study, which found that gender and sexuality are important in the embodiment of Latin identities. This thesis augments the literature on Latin Americans in London by shedding light on an area that had not hitherto received scholarly attention: the perspectives of young women from Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador on Latina femininities. Previous work had addressed gender-based violence (McIlwaine 2008a) and gender ideologies more

generally (McIlwaine 2008b, 2010), with the focus primarily on migratory trajectories, employment, and gender relations between adults living as a couple. By contrast, the young women interviewed as part of this study were in full-time education and living with their parent(s). Looking beyond the local setting, this thesis aligns with previous research on gender and migration emphasising the role of moralising discourses in the construction of femininity (e.g. Espiritu 2001). It makes a contribution to this body of work firstly by establishing linkages between feminine appearance, dancing, and aspiration in the discursive positioning of young women. Secondly by suggesting that it is useful to consider, not just how the ideologies which migrants are exposed to transnationally (i.e. in the country of origin and the country of residence) differ or are contradictory, but also how they coincide and reinforce each other. This was argued in the case of young women being under what I termed ‘polycentric pressures’ (drawing on Blommaert et al.’s (2005) concept of polycentricity) to engage in self-eroticisation and objectification.

These findings illustrate Barth’s (1969:14) point about how, “since belonging to an ethnic category implies being a certain kind of person, having that basic identity, it also implies a claim to be judged, and to judge oneself, by those standards that are relevant to that identity.” In this study these standards were found to relate to language, body aesthetics, and dance. Appearance and speech are arguably the most immediate and foremost semiotic modalities that allow us to locate ourselves and others in social hierarchies. This study has shown how the attribution and evaluation of linguistic and embodied practices functioned as a means to produce differentiation and hierarchisation among community members. Thus, there was inferiorisation of Latinas acting in an excessively sexual manner (Chapter 6) and complaints about ELA parents talking too loudly during assembly (Chapter 5). In both cases, practices were read as embodied excess (cf. Skeggs 2005; Bourdieu 1991) and were criticised (like Elephant and Castle) for conveying an image that associates Latinos with ignorance, backwardness, or lower class-ness. Furthermore, linguistic and embodied practices were evaluated according to whether they were deemed to be indicative of aspiration. Thus, language orientation could be read, not only in terms of ethnic affiliation, but also in aspirational terms. For instance, in the accounts of the two Peruvian young women who rejected speaking Spanish with other Latinas at their local comprehensive school in favour of practising English with non-Latino students (Chapter 6), what was most valued was not the demonstration of ethnic belonging, but of aspirational strategy. These young women understood that proficiency in English was necessary for academic achievement, and hence potential social mobility, while they pathologised the Latinas’ misrecognition of the need to adapt to locally dominant linguistic norms, and portrayed it as

a failure to integrate. Similarly, at ELA, the positive evaluation of parents ensuring that their children would develop bilingual proficiency was partly premised on the idea that bilingual children would have better chances of securing institutionalised capital and not be disadvantaged in the job market because of a lack of linguistic capital, like their parents (Chapter 5). Generally, Latino parents were judged according to whether they oriented to learning and supported the educational achievement of their children; such was the case of mothers who were criticised for privileging the inculcation of beautification, over intellectual self-realisation, to their daughters. This hierarchisation of linguistic and embodied practices reflects a wider societal discourse that constructs individual betterment as achieved through intellectual pursuit and academic success; it also illustrates the symbolic violence inflicted by the misrecognition of the underlying power relations which sustain the legitimacy of particular practices (cf. Bourdieu 1991). Such discourses tally with the recurrent motif in narratives of migration to ‘better oneself’ and to improve the life chances, and educational opportunities, of one’s children (Chamberlain 2005; Datta et al. 2009; Portes & Rumbaut 2001).

7.3 Conceptual contributions and suggestions for further research

As mentioned in the introduction, the vast majority of research on *latinidad* originates in the USA, where the presence of migrants originating from Latin America is an established part of the demographic and cultural landscape, as well as public discourse. This thesis contributes to this scholarly tradition by focusing on the articulation of discourses of *latinidad* in a European context and a global city. Like other studies on the Latino diaspora (e.g. Laó-Montes & Davila 2001 and Román-Velázquez 1999), it has found that dance was a prominent embodied practice in the construction and realisation of *latinidad*. This study also aligns with the existing research on the Latin American community in the UK (Cock 2009; McIlwaine, Cock, & Linneker 2011; Mas Giralt 2011), by highlighting how questions of community recognition and community visibility are salient issues and are seen as integral to community integration. In addition, its findings resonate with the work of Block (2006, 2008), in that they emphasise the significance of language proficiency and orientation in affiliative and aspirational discourses. However this study differs from and augments Block’s work in several ways. Whereas the research carried out by Block is based on life story interviews with a small sample of adults, this thesis complements interview data with participant-observation and collection of artefacts, assembled over an extended period of time, with several generations of Latino/a migrants. Thus, whereas Block focuses on

language ideologies related to ethnic affiliation and to employment, this study examines language ideological discourses within the family, concerning intergenerational communication and aspirational strategy. Moreover, it investigates how *latinidad* is strategically articulated in the discourse of a community institution, and how it is gendered and embodied in the accounts of young women.

Indeed, this thesis operationalizes the notion of *latinidad* more systematically than was done by Block and thus expands the theoretical reach of the research on the Latin American community in London and the UK. Building on the writings of Flores (1997) on the Latino community in the USA, this study has explored the dialectic between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’ imaginings in the construction of *latinidad* among Latino Londoners, and has attended to the role of cultural imagery in the local imaginary. Recalling the theorisation of *latinidad* by Molina-Guzmán (2010) presented in Chapter 1, it has examined four aspects of the production of *latinidad*: (a) the UK census, (b) popular culture, (c) communal cultural expressions of Latino/as, and (d) individual subjectivities. Firstly, it has pinpointed how official nomenclatures and the wider ethno-political context of the UK impact on the discourse and agenda of a minority institution. Secondly, by focusing on representational intersectionality, it has identified popular culture narratives which portray Latin American migrants as underprivileged and underachieving, and eroticise Latinas. Thirdly, it has highlighted how three types of semiotic modalities were construed as part of Latin American heritage: the Spanish language, feminine beautification, and dancing. Fourthly, it has attended to participants’ individual perspectives, which were found to be informed by experiences of life in Latin America and in the UK (and even Spain). Where this thesis furthers research on the Latino diaspora is by developing the conceptualisation of *latinidad* in relation to the theories of strategic essentialism and cultural capital, in a global city.

Overall, this thesis can be seen as an illustration of what happens to *latinidad* in a migratory context: people embrace or reject labels and practices associated with *latinidad* because of the meaning and value given to them contextually. For an organisation like ELA, I argued that it was beneficial to adopt the Latin American label, rather than a Spanish-speaking one. In addition, I also showed how the school presented Colombian characteristics (i.e., it was founded by, and mainly comprised of, Colombian families, and served Colombian food), yet it did not adopt a Colombian name. Furthermore, although participants described Latinas in general as appearance-conscious and attractive, it was *colombianas* who were particularly characterised as such. In both cases, there was a tension between the national and supra-national labels, and their affordances in this particular migratory setting.

In other words, what this study finds is that *latinidad* in London was Colombian-oriented, but I suggest that the pan-ethnic label was preferred, in strategic terms, to the Colombian descriptor, which, moreover, suffers from negative associations with crime.

The choice of ethnic label is one of the factors in how Latino Londoners position themselves on the London stage. What this study also shows is how Latin American Londoners prioritised different forms of capital, and that this was a source of tensions between group members. Reading practices in terms of capital is important because capital is intrinsically tied to social position, aspiration, and disadvantage. Tensions arose as the result of divergence between institutional and individual agendas; for instance, when parents chose to take advantage of the services offered by ELA (facilitating the transmission of linguistic, cultural, and social capital), but did not comply with the school's instructions with regards to language choice between family members. Construing ethnicity and language as mutually constitutive was also the reason why some Latino parents were aggrieved by the presence of non-Spanish-speaking parents at the school. In both cases, the dispute was linked to the ethnicisation of the display and pursuit of linguistic capital. Elsewhere, the appearance of Latinas was the object of evaluating and pathologising discourses, as members expressed condemnation of women privileging body capital at the detriment of the type of cultural capital that could be institutionalised (in other words, sanctioned by school).

These examples highlight how the transnational dimension of trajectories and ideologies was an important factor in shaping discourses of *latinidad*, especially in accounting for the contingent exchange value of linguistic and embodied practices. Indeed, this study found that, among Latino Londoners, the linkages between semiotic modalities and aspirational stance were subject to multiple variations, notably according to location (e.g. UK / Colombia), domain (e.g. school / home), and social position. By this I mean that what could be read as part of a legitimate strategy to achieve greater social recognition in one setting, could be given new meaning elsewhere. For instance, with regards to linguistic practices, in London, for Latino families to speak English among themselves could be construed as an excessive orientation to Whiteness, whereas in Latin America, it could be admired for signalling successful migration to an Anglophone country – a linguistic ‘whitening’ practice associated with upward mobility. With regards to embodied practices, displaying a hyperfeminine, artificial aesthetic in the *paisa* region of Colombia was represented as a legitimate and normalised way of accruing symbolic capital, while it was more likely to be devalued in the UK, by being coded as cheap (like the Essex Girl) or by being seen as conflicting with a good pupil position. As a result, a conceptual contribution of this thesis is

to suggest that there is scope for a focus on transnationalism and capital to be made explicit in Molina-Guzmán's framework on *latinidad*. This can be done first by exploring the extent to which "individual subjectivities" are shaped by a "dual frame of reference" (Guarnizo 1997) or by "polycentricity" (Blommaert et al. 2005:85). Second, what Molina-Guzmán terms the "communal cultural expressions of Latino/as" can be examined in terms of the capital they are deemed to bring and to index, both in the sending and receiving countries. Thus, a multi-layered understanding of Latino/a migrants can be reached by probing at the localised and globalised meaning and affordances of sociocultural practices related to *latinidad*.

This analysis provides a level of abstraction that can be applied to other migratory contexts and global cities. In other words, for migrant communities, there may be pressures and incentives to essentialise strategically, and to maximise the appeal of community heritage to non-group members, so as to gain recognition, resources, and popularity. At the same time, what the case of ELA has shown, is that turning community heritage (e.g. linguistic capital) into a commodity available to non-group members can cause frictions, as it can be seen to 'dilute' it; in other words, what used to be considered a practice that identified the group and set it apart from the others is now part of cultural capital that is desired by and made accessible to others. Furthermore, tensions may arise when consumers, both from within and beyond the group, are only interested in investing in and acquiring this form of capital because it can accrue symbolic value (i.e. by leading to qualifications and thus institutionalised capital), rather than considering it an activity that must necessarily be carried out to claim and define group membership. Indeed, this study illustrates how one of the challenges for members of migrant communities is to negotiate which labels and semiotic practices associated with their ethnic group they wish to embrace, on the basis of which type of social and cultural capital they wish to generate and pass on. For future research, this means charting the transnational recontextualisation of certain forms of capital and the impact this has on the trajectory and discourse of migrants.

Furthermore, in this study, I set out to study a site of *latinidad* – ELA – and found that this school was less Latin American than it had first seemed, or rather, that it was *more* than a Latin American institution; it also offered linguistic and cultural products to super-diverse consumers in a pluralist market-place. In addition I found that the representation of Latinas (especially *colombianas*) as hyperfeminine and sexualised beings could be linked to Latin American patriarchal norms and feminine aesthetics, but could also be understood in non-ethnic terms, as part of the sexualisation of culture and commodification of the body in

neoliberal economies (Scharff & Gill 2011; Walter 2010). What these two examples have in common is that, in a global city like London, the search for Latin American institutions and practices proved to yield more than *latinidad*. Consequently, I suggest that further research on *latinidad* should also look beyond ethnicising discourses, and should ask whether ethnicised ideologies and practices also have meaning beyond the context in which they are found and can be understood in terms of wider social and stratifying processes.

In this final section, I outline avenues for further research that could build on this study.

This thesis has demonstrated the value of investigating how a complementary school functions on a day-to-day basis and articulates its purpose in official representations, in order to develop an in-depth understanding of contextual ideologies, such as: ethno-political pressures, the status of the language being taught, and the range of rationales that motivate parents to send their child to a complementary school. Hence, a fruitful line of investigation would be to apply this approach to other complementary schools teaching elite languages (e.g. French), in order to find out whether they display a similarly heterogeneous cohort, and, if so, to investigate how this is managed in relation to their official ethnolinguistic positioning. This would provide a useful point of comparison, necessary to get a sense of how unique ELA may be, or whether, in fact, the pragmatic pluralism it displayed in its discourse and recruitment methods is a characteristic of certain complementary schools in London (or in the UK).

In this study, it was possible to develop an in-depth understanding of the lives and perspectives of participants who were, in the most part, female, and who oriented towards bilingual proficiency and academic studies. There are two lines of enquiry that follow on from this: one that addresses the sex of participants and the construction of gender, and another that concerns linguistic and educational orientation. Firstly, as a result of the fact that fieldwork was carried out by a female researcher, in a predominantly feminine environment, this study has attended to the discourses of young women on Latina femininities. Further research on the discourses of women on Latino masculinities would provide an interesting counterpoint to this study. In particular it would be useful to ask whether there are essentialising expectations regarding the appearance and behaviour of Latinos, and whether machoism has any resonance in the lives of young Latino/as growing up in the UK. It would also be valuable to attend to the experiences of young men, and to explore the potential linkages between hypermasculinity, embodiment, and aspiration in their discourse. The impact of the aesthetics and discourse of hip-hop and reggaeton would

need to be taken into consideration, as would the findings of recent ethnographic research on Latino masculinities, such as Corona's (2012) in Barcelona.

Secondly, it would be of immense value to conduct an ethnographic study of those who do not orient towards bilingualism and academic studies, in order to comprehend better how their linguistic and embodied practices are related to aspirational strategies, and how they make sense of the forms of capital available to them. As with all ethnographic projects, it was not possible to give full treatment to all the data collected, or to pursue all the issues that arose during fieldwork. For instance, female participants from Southside College reported very negative experiences of learning English and of attending secondary school; overall, the courses they had studied or were studying in London were at odds with the level of their previous studies in Latin America, their level of maturity, and the nature of their aspirations. One was about to leave Southside College with few vocational qualifications, before probably entering the low-skilled, low-paid end of the job market (or becoming a teenage mother, see footnote 100). From the overall data obtained, it would seem that the age and stage at which young migrants enter the education system (at Key Stage 2, 3, or 4, for instance) may be a decisive factor in their linguistic and social integration; moreover it is possible that family separation and regroupment also play an important role. Therefore sustained and varied engagement with young migrants not following an academic route and/or having difficulties with integrating linguistically would make it possible to appreciate their trajectory and give a voice to their experiences of living in London.

Overall, this thesis makes original contributions to knowledge by uncovering new data on an under-researched migrant group and by operationalizing and developing the concept of *latinidad* in the London context. The data it is based on illustrate "the messiness of practice, its failure to fit perfectly with neat structural analyses, the social ambiguities and contradictions it embodies" (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1995:37). Thus, this study has been able to complicate the notion of 'Latin American community' in London, by exposing how discourses of *latinidad* were subject to negotiation and contestation, and by situating them in relation to local and global ideologies regimenting linguistic and embodied practices. Defined by its ethnographic and exploratory stance, my thesis is a contribution towards mapping the sociolinguistic and embodied experiences of migrants, and appreciating how these are shaped by intersecting social pressures.

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Appendix A: Information sheets and consent forms



INFORMATION SHEET FOR SCHOOLS / COLLEGES

REC Protocol Number: REP(EM)/08/09-42

YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS INFORMATION SHEET

Language and media practices in London Latino families

Aims of the research: Very little is known about Latino families with children in London. This study aims to find out more about:

- how Latino parents and adolescents use Spanish and English
- how Latino adolescents relate to the Latin American community in London
- how Latino parents and adolescents use various media (internet, TV, press...) to connect with Latin American culture.

Participants: Adolescents and parents who originally came from, or whose parents originally came from, a Spanish-speaking Latin American country.

Study: Fieldwork will last until 2010 and will involve interviews and discussion groups.

How you will be involved: I will conduct some interviews with some students and/or some parents of Latin American origin, and possibly organise some discussion groups with students, at the school. These will be organised in careful consultation with [name of contact].

Participation: I will initially explain the nature of the project to potential participants, answer any queries they might have, and leave them with an information sheet. I will allow enough time for them to reflect on whether they want to participate or not. If they are under 16, they will have the opportunity to discuss the information sheet with their parent / guardian. Once they decide that they want to take part, they will need to sign a consent form; for under-16s, their parent / guardian will need to sign a different form. Wherever possible I will endeavour to meet or speak to the parents and make myself available for any clarification they may need.

Confidentiality: Any information provided by the participants will be safely kept and won't be disclosed to others. Names and any other personal information will be changed in the report so that it is not possible to identify participants.

Withdrawal of data: Once someone has decided to participate, they will have 3 months to withdraw their data.

Findings: A summary of the findings will be available at the end of the study, in 2011. If you would like to receive a copy, let me know.

Information about the researcher:

Language teacher who has taught Spanish & French in London secondary schools and English as a foreign language to teenagers and adults in England and in France. This study is part of her PhD on the Latin American community in London.

Contacts: If you have any questions or problems related to this study, please don't hesitate to contact either the Researcher or the Project Supervisor.

Researcher: Sophie Kelsall, sophie.kelsall@kcl.ac.uk or 07532 276 089.

Project supervisor: Professor Ben Rampton

Department of Education and Professional Studies,
King's College London,
Franklin-Wilkins Building,
Waterloo Bridge Wing,
Stamford Street,

London SE1 9NN
tel: 020 7848 3711
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ben.rampton@kcl.ac.uk

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS – Spanish

version

REC Protocol Number: REP(EM)/08/09-42

SE LE DARÁ UNA COPIA DE ESTA HOJA DE INFORMACIÓN

Idiomas y medios de comunicación en las familias latinas londinenses

Quisiera invitarle a participar en mi proyecto de investigación. Sólo debe participar si lo desea; no hay ningún problema si no quiere participar. Antes de decidir, es importante que sepa más acerca del proyecto y de lo que conlleva su participación. Por favor, tómese el tiempo necesario para leer este documento con cuidado y hablar de ello con otra gente si quiere. Pregúnteme cualquier cosa si algo no queda claro o si le gustaría más información.

Objetivos de la investigación: Se sabe muy poco de las familias latinas con hijos en Londres. Este estudio intenta saber más de:

- cómo usan el inglés y el español las familias latinas con hijos
- cómo se identifican los adolescentes con la comunidad latina aquí en Londres
- cómo usan distintos medios de comunicación (Internet, televisión, prensa...) para mantenerse en contacto con la cultura latinoamericana.

Participantes: Adolescentes y padres que vinieron de, o cuyos padres vinieron de, un país hispanohablante en Latinoamérica.

Su participación: Hablaremos de varios temas, los dos sólo o en un grupo de discusión con otra gente. Grabaré nuestras conversaciones porque eso me ayudará a entender mejor lo que se está diciendo.

Confidencialidad: Cualquier información que proporcione será guardada con cuidado y no será divulgada a terceras personas. Su nombre y cualquier otro dato personal suyo se cambiarán en el informe para que no sea posible identificarle.

Si decide participar, habrá un periodo de tres meses desde el comienzo de su participación para retirar los datos proporcionados si lo desea.

Hallazgos: Un resumen de los hallazgos será disponible al final del estudio en el año 2011. Si desea recibir una copia, avíseme.

Participación: Si está interesado en participar, rellene el formulario de consentimiento adjuntado.

Si es menor de dieciséis años, pídale a su madre/padre/tutor que lea esta hoja de información y que firme el formulario de consentimiento, del cual recibirá una copia posteriormente. Su participación en esta investigación es totalmente voluntaria. Si decide participar en este estudio, puede retirarse en cualquier momento durante su transcurso.

Contacto: en caso de que tenga alguna pregunta, no dude ponerse en contacto conmigo, Sophie Kelsall, en esta dirección: sophie.kelsall@kcl.ac.uk o este número: 07532 276 089.

Si tiene cualquier problema relacionado con este estudio, póngase en contacto con el director del estudio:

Professor Ben Rampton
Department of Education and Professional Studies,
King's College London,
Franklin-Wilkins Building,
Waterloo Bridge Wing,
Stamford Street,
London SE1 9NN

tel: 020 7848 3711
fax: 020 7848 3182
ben.rampton@kcl.ac.uk

CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH STUDIES – ENGLISH VERSION

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Title of Study: Language and media practices in London Latino families

King's College Research Ethics Committee Ref: REP(EM)/08/09-42

- Thank you for considering to take part in this research. The person organizing the research must explain the project to you before you agree to take part.
- If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.
- *I understand that if I decide at any other time during the research that I no longer wish to participate in this project, I can notify the researches involved and be withdrawn from it immediately without giving any reason. Furthermore, I understand that I will be able to withdraw my data until three months after I have started to participate in the study.*
- *I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes explained to me. I understand that such information will be treated in accordance with the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998.*

Participant's Statement:

I _____

agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in the study. I have read both the notes written above and the Information Sheet about the project, and understand what the research study involves.

Signed _____

Date _____

Researcher's Statement:

I _____

confirm that I have carefully explained the nature, demands and foreseeable risks (where applicable) of the proposed research to the volunteer.

Signed _____

Date _____

Appendix B: Coding categories

LANGUAGE, ETHNICITY & ETHNOPOLITICS

Language choice & competence

Multilingualism / Non Latino parents & kids

Literacy

Origins / aims / uses of ELA

Ethnic representation / cultural learning

Banal nationalism

Ethnic identification & belonging

Ethnic /cultural stereotyping

Typification of London Latinos

Educating parents

Ethnopolitics

Funding / Resources

Latinidad

LATINAS

Body, looks, sexiness

Teen mums

Celebration of mothers

Gender roles

Aspirations / employment

FIELDWORK

Relations / positionality

Appendix C: 'You know you are a Latino in London if...' Facebook page

YOU KNOW YOU ARE A LATINO IN LONDON IF...

Wall

Info

Photos

Discussions

Basic Info

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name: | YOU KNOW YOU ARE A LATINO IN LONDON IF... |
| Category: | Just for Fun - Inside Jokes |
| Description: | <p>u kno ur a latino in london if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - u don't say innit, u say ine - u finish ur sentence with the word men eg. 'na men' - uve herd of baby chaneey. - uv ever done a limpiesa, or a remplazo, or had a 'complain' - u don't ask a chik if she is Latina, u kno just by looking at her jeans. - u have msn. - u have more dan one person on ur msn list calld suttin latino or latin suttin - elefant or seven sisters means suttin to u. - uv played football in burgess park or clapham park, or uve gone to c someone play football wid other latinos. - u kno a christiano, u are a christiano or uve bin to chancery lane church. - uve had a rat tail or mad hair once in ur life. - ppl ask u if u are Turkish, or Indian, or arab. And only rarely ask u if u are latino. - someone asks u wa country u are from and u say Colombia or Ecuador etc... and they say suttin stupid like 'aint dat In mexico' - ppl think that u are Spanish. NO WE ARE LATINO. - u supported Newcastle for a while when asprilla played there. - u liked aston villa aswell cos angel played there. - u like bashment and greet ppl with the phrase 'wag1 parce.' - u have a picture of urself doing shisha. - uve bin to carnival del pueblo and thought this is shit, but still show up every year. - u are linked to every other muthafukin latino in london some way or other. - u kno what SFX is or Hammersmith or St.Charles. - u only kno like 1 mexican or 1 uruguayan, but bare ecuas and Colombians. |

Appendix D: Original Spanish quotations (extended)

CHAPTER 3

Section 3.5.2: Ángela's family

Sofía, juntas compartimos la misma inspiración d nuestro Dios al darnos la dicha de ser mujer y todo lo que abarca este hermoso ser..! Feliz día de la mujer amiga, q Dios te siga bendiciendo hoy y siempre..! ☺ con amor Ángela
Data extract 3.A Text message from Ángela (08/03/11)

Section 3.5.3: Belén's family

Mujer.....
Este es un saludo muy especial en nuestro día. Un homenaje de felicitación por esa gran y noble tarea de ser madres abnegadas, esposas entregadas, amiga incondicional, profesionales admiradas y sobretodo incansables luchadoras contra el machismo y la igualdad de deberes y derechos en el hogar y la sociedad.
Fraternalmente.

BELÉN Y FAMILIA

Data extract 3.B Email from Belén (08/03/11)

CHAPTER 5

Section 5.2.1: "Here we speak Spanish"

- 0.34 Patricia *y le gusta mucho el español **
para mí no ha sido difícil
*enseñarle **
no ha sido difícil para mí
Sophie *y y habla inglés*
Patricia *habla en inglés bien*
pero en la casa siempre trato
de que sea el español él que predomine
porque en la escuela de inglés
en una reunión que tuvimos
*la profesora nos dijo **
"nosotros en la escuela
nos encargamos del inglés
y ustedes como padres
*se deben encargar del idioma de ustedes **
y son afortunados porque
sus hijos van a dominar dos idiomas
entonces no lo dejen perder"
01.21 *entonces eso sucede en la casa*

Data extract 5.B Interview with Patricia (06/06/09)

- 43.30 Luz *si lo coges de chiquito*
siempre
totalmente es totalmente

*como si hubiese sido criado allá **
o sea yo me he dado cuenta los niños que
que que hablan mejor español
luego tú hablas con los papás
y los papás dicen que
“siempre hemos hablado con ellos en español”
*y no me cae la menor duda **

43.52 *no me cae la menor duda*
 Data extract 5.C Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

Section 5.2.2: “It’s not a language, it’s a culture”

Tenemos claro que vivimos en otra cultura diferente a la nuestra que afecta en forma directa la formación y desarrollo de la niñez y juventud, por consiguiente nuestro propósito fundamental es mantener nuestra lengua (EL ESPAÑOL), nuestra música, la danza, el teatro, la pintura y todas las formas posibles de comunicación que le permitan a los niños y jóvenes latinoamericanos recrear y asimilar nuestra cultura con toda la riqueza que ella contiene.

Data extract 5.D ELA leaflet

41.17 Luz *entonces yo les comentaba*
 que era chévere que se sentaran con los niños
 a hacer la lectura de pronto que ()
 y pues que les compartieran
 les complementarían esas lecturas

41.26 *con lo que ellos sabían y todo*
 Data extract 5.F Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

41.29 Luz *entonces decía ...*
 que era muy chévere
 lo que estaba pasando
 porque ella estaba aprendiendo con el niño también
 pero que a ella sí que le quedaba muy difícil
 complementar
 y eso es porque

41.37 *“hasta ahora lo estoy aprendiendo”*
 Data extract 5.G Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

41.56 Luz *su español es perfecto*
 o sea se nota
 que en su casa siempre se ha hablado español
 pero no se han compartido muchas cosas más allá
 así me entiendes a nivel de cultura
 a nivel de geografía historia

42.08 *ella no sabía esas cosas*
 Data extract 5.H Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

Section 5.2.3: Being with ‘your people’

Desarrollar un trabajo educativo en busca de:

- *Nuestras raíces latinoamericanas.*
- *Nuestra identidad.*
- *Solidificar nuestro ser latino.*
- *Encontrar elementos que nos son comunes.*
- *Generar sentido de comunidad.*
- ...
- *Desarrollar la capacidad de convivencia e interacción del niño en una realidad lejana a nuestras raíces latinoamericanas.*

Data extract 5.I ELA leaflet

- 81.43 Mandana *ah si tuviera niños
sí yo creo que eso
las escuelas este como ELA
[son muy importantes este * y muy necesarias
Sophie [o una escuela lati- sí
porque el niño creciendo acá
este en una como en una sociedad
que es este inglesa
es otra cultura *
es importante que mantenga sus raíces
y ese tipo de escuela
no sólo enseñan un idioma
sino enseñan también lo que es tu cultura
y lo que es este
convivir con los tuyos
entonces es muy importante para unir la comunidad también
y para que los los nuevos
la nueva generación que está viniendo
82.19 pueda mantener su identidad también*

Data extract 5.M Interview with Mandana and Belén (20/11/09)

Section 5.3.2: Latin American families

- 04.48 Sandra *los niños lo general
es que hablan en inglés
y los pa- los padres preguntan en español
y responden en español
pero los niños hablan en inglés
o sea eso es como yo c-
o sea me parece es la generalidad
Sophie uh hm
uh hm y ¿qué te parece eso?*

- 05.06 Sandra *(3.0) no pues que no debe ser así*

Data extract 5.Q Interview with Sandra (24/10/10)

- 44.18 Sophie *y ¿hay padres
que te han contado que
que les cuesta
hablar español en casa
les resulta más fácil hablar inglés o no?*

Luz *no pero no que ellos hablen
sino que no obligan a sus hijos a que hablen *
o sea que me dicen
y son muchísimos
cuando el español de los niños no está muy bien
yo les digo:
“oye qué no sé qué qué
mira qué hablas con ellos
en español”
me dicen:
“no profesora
yo siempre le hablo al niño en español”
y se los creo
porque tú le hablas al niño el niño te entiende todo *
“pero es que el niño me contesta en inglés
y mira yo estoy tan cansada
no hay tiempo
y mientras que le estoy diciendo que hable en inglés
hay que hacer la tarea
hay que ir a comer
hay que ir a acostarse
y ya está tarde
pues yo lo dejo que él me conteste en inglés
y luego yo () le hablo en español
y él me contesta en inglés”*

45.03

Data extract 5.R Interview with Luz (Interview 15/10/10)

02.52 Patricia *le hablo del caso de Manuela
Manuela antes de que entrara aquí
y ese error lo tuvo muy muy grave mi hermana
era que en la casa
eh mi hermana le hablaba en español
Manuela entendía pero respondía en inglés *
o mi hermana le hablaba parte de español *
y parte en inglés *
espanglish ...
entonces yo le decía a ella ()
“eso no está bien
o ella habla inglés
o habla español” **

03.28

Data extract 5.T Interview with Patricia (06/06/09)

40.53 Ángela *hay dos familias allí
y sobre todo una que son ecuatorianos ()
y ellos le hablan en inglés al niño
a Mauricio por ejemplo
Mauricio no no me habla español
pero es que ello- en la reunión
el papá me respondió cosas en inglés*

41.13

Data extract 5.U Interview with Ángela (08/04/10)

Section 5.3.5: Unsuitable motives

- 23.32 Luz *también me he dado cuenta que
o sea la gente latinoamericana
que está ahí
mucha gente trabaja muy duro
muy duro
y esa gente trabaja duro para su familia
para sus hijos
no trabajan para nada más
entonces a veces uno pronto juzga
y dice que se interesan que no sé qué
pero a veces no es eso
de pronto es que
sí se interesan demasiado
por eso es que están trabajando*
- 23.53 *solamente para [sus niños]*
- Data extract 5.Y Interview with Luz (15/10/10)

CHAPTER 6

Section 6.2: Tara, Latina and Londoner beauty queen

Aunque nació en Londres, sus rasgos la delatan: sus ojos oscuros y su cabello negro hablan de la ascendencia latina de esta joven de padres colombianos que afirma estar "orgullosa" de sus orígenes.

Data extract 6.A *El País* (04/05/10)

El triunfo de Tara Hoyos-Martínez ha generado un gran impacto en la comunidad latina en el Reino Unido. "Es un paso grande para que nos podamos integrar, triunfar y para que nos ayude a quitarnos la imagen negativa del ojo público. Quiero ser una voz para demostrar que somos trabajadores, honestos y humildes", comentó la chica.

Data extract 6.B *BBC Mundo* (04/05/10)

Section 6.4: "It's all about beauty"

- 44.35 Liliana *las latinas sí*
Sophie *las latinas sí*
Liliana *a cambio
una cosa que me gusta mucho
de la gente inglesa
es que son muy
son muy descomplicadas
cómo le digo*
- 44.50 *no comen del qué dirán
como la gente como la gente latina*
- Data extract 6.C Interview with Liliana (13/03/09)

- 31.55 Bibiana *las modelos no hasta las señoras
las colombianas somos muchas*

*somos muy pres- muy bien presentadas **
y para nosotros no es
pues para pues
yo personalmente no
no me visto así
para verme sexy ni ni ()
pero al fin termino viéndome así present-
pues no me voy a poner una sudadera
y lo que sea
para ir a una fiesta
porque a mí me han enseñado
que tienes que ir bonita y atractiva
entonces yo creo que todo el mundo
tiene esa imagen de las latinas
especialmente con todos los latinos famosos

32.27

Data extract 6.F Interview with Bibiana (21/11/09)

11.02 Sophie *y la forma de vestir*
tú como chica ¿qué
¿te sientes cómoda con la forma de vestir aquí?
¿es igual que en Ecuador o no?
 Rosario *no es igual*
a lo menos las latinas
en las chicas latinas para nada
son demasiado
cómo es la palabra perfecta para eso
mm (1.0) no sé (1.0)
se visten demasiado sexy

Data extract 6.G Interview with Rosario (06/03/09)

130.08 Mandana *y tal vez por eso*
un poco también me alejé del
*del del grupo de latinas porque **
no tenían buena imagen
dentro del colegio y
y entre (1.0) la gente que más
estu- se dedicaba a estudiar
y a trabajar y hacer las cosas
no estaban ellos involucrados
era era al contrario
ellos estaban en los últimos sets
 130.29 *si siquiera venían [al colegio]*

Data extract 6.G Interview with Mandana (20/11/09)

Section 6.5: “Being Latin, we are used to dancing like that”

34.42 Bibiana *mi mamá siempre nos ha dicho*
“no no (vayan) a bailar muy muy cerquita”
“no dejen que las toquen”

34.58 *pero creo que otras mamás*

*ni lo piensan **
ni piensan “cuidado con esto”
o “cuida- no vayan a hacer esto”
no les dicen nada
“ah disfrute” y “ciao”

35.07

Data extract 6.J Interview with Bibiana (21/11/09)